

Longworth House Office Building room 1334  
15 Independence Avenue SE, Washington DC 20515  
The Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources Legislative Hearing  
H.R. 5482 (Rep. Hageman) "Energy Poverty Prevention and Accountability Act of 2023"

Testimony for Derrick Hollie, Founder of Energy Poverty Prevention Project

Tuesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Greetings Chairman, Pete Stauber

Ranking Member Ocasio-Cortez and Members of the Committee.

Thank you for the opportunity and for allowing me to speak today.

I'm not going to mince words here. By destroying America's energy independence, the Biden Administration is directly making Black Americans more poor and less independent than ever. Since Biden's first day in office with the shutdown of the Keystone pipeline project and his ongoing war on a key pillar of our economy, we've all experienced skyrocketing energy costs that punish the very people he claims to care about.

I'm Derrick Hollie, founder of the Energy Poverty Prevention Project. I founded the organization to enable us to continue leading the charge to expand awareness of energy poverty in the United States and its implications on at-risk communities like minorities, senior citizens, rural and Native Americans. The mission of the Energy Poverty Prevention Project is to create equal access to affordable and reliable energy for all Americans. We are committed to changing energy regulations that fail to provide American citizens with access to affordable and reliable energy needed to maintain personal health and economic security.

Since 2019, I have had the opportunity to appear before Congress six times to give testimony on energy poverty and other related issues impacting at-risk communities. My experience addressing energy poverty includes authoring over fifty op-eds and editorials and developing education and outreach campaigns. My passion for American energy is deeply rooted in my own story, stemming from my grandfather, who was a black coal miner in Southwest Virginia, and my time serving as a brakeman for Norfolk Southern Railways, where we transported coal and other natural resources here and abroad.

Energy poverty occurs when individuals and families are unable to afford basic heating, electricity, and gas needs. High energy costs and the lack of energy services negatively impact a household's well-being and limit opportunity. Vulnerable populations like minorities, senior

citizens, and native Americans are most often disproportionately affected by energy poverty. These inflationary pressures and the terrible consequences aren't the result of a free market at work, but overzealous policy pushed by paternalistic lawmakers who think they know what's best for everyone with a "one size fits all approach."

Energy is a fixed cost for small families and large enterprises alike, and we know when the price of energy increases, so does everything else. It costs more to drive, it impacts the cost of groceries, and most critically, come winter, it costs more to heat your home. Rising energy costs are making it harder or next to impossible for Black families to make ends meet. Tragically, the pause on new oil and gas leases on Federal land, and overregulation accompanied with an aggressive green agenda by the Biden Administration has many Americans experiencing energy poverty for the first time.

There is no reason anyone in our country should be without affordable energy. The United States is abundantly rich in natural resources, including natural gas, petroleum, and coal. America is more capable than ever of providing affordable energy to its citizens. The United States was energy independent in 2019 for the first time in decades, producing more energy domestically than what we consumed. This, along with a booming shale industry, helped America overtake Saudi Arabia and Russia to become the top exporter of petroleum and natural gas globally.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, fossil fuels accounted for about 81% of U.S. energy production in 2022. Renewables reached their highest production in 2022 and only accounted for 13% of all energy production. More figures from EIA show that renewables received \$15.6 billion of subsidies in fiscal year 2022, compared to \$3.6 billion for fossil fuels. Per the EIA report, renewable energy industries received nearly five times as much in federal subsidies than fossil fuels despite having such a small impact. Renewable projects are also very costly. An article by ENERGYWIRE in September, the Alliance for Clean Energy New York (ACENY) told regulators in June, due to cost, "canceled or delayed projects would drastically derail the schedule for renewable development" and cause the state to miss its mandates under the law.

Eliminating energy poverty should be a goal we all are interested in achieving. In working towards that goal, we need to be mindful of how environmental policies will impact the vulnerable communities that need our support. Radical environmentalists and the Biden Administration like to frame this as a fight against big energy, but all they are really doing is pushing Black Americans and other at-risk communities further into poverty. When the government creates policy, its priority should be the welfare of the people, especially those impacted the hardest. We need a market-oriented energy policy that will allow America to safely keep exploring and developing our own natural resources for a more secure and prosperous future for all Americans.

Thank you.