

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Energy
“The Electric Grid of the Future”
June 7, 2018

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing, and I would like to thank each of the witnesses for being here today.

DOE’s Office of Electricity supports programs that are critical to improving the flexibility and reliability of our electric grid, while also enabling a broad range of clean energy resources to play a far larger role in our nation’s power and transportation sectors.

This is another reason that I am so concerned about the Administration’s budget proposal for the Department, which would cut funding for this office by 37 percent. And that overall cut includes a 62% cut to clean energy transmission and reliability, a 74% cut to smart grid research, and an 81% energy storage R&D – despite the fact that Secretary Perry has now referred to energy storage as the “holy grail” of energy in several Congressional hearings.

These large proposed cuts to energy reliability and resilience research are also curious in light of several recent proposals made by the Secretary to take unprecedented, urgent actions that would prop up uneconomic power plants under the guise of ensuring the reliability and resilience of our electric grid. Independent experts across the political spectrum have resoundingly rejected these proposals in favor of a far more rigorous, well-justified approach to addressing these issues, while continuing to make substantial progress toward our nation’s clean energy future.

As I believe Mr. Gramlich will be able to discuss in more detail, there is no reason that we can’t have a secure, clean, reliable, and resilient energy sector that takes advantage of a broad range of our resource and technology options, including renewables, energy storage, nuclear power, and fossil fuels with carbon capture, without going to such extreme, ill-conceived lengths to save one particular resource at the expense of the others.

Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to note that, sadly, this will be the Committee’s last hearing staffed by Joe Flarida – at least for now. Joe has worked for us for over 5 years, starting out as an intern and rising to become one of the top staffers on our Energy Subcommittee team. Joe has done outstanding, highly professional work throughout his time on the Committee, including developing several substantive, well-vetted, bipartisan legislative proposals that I am confident will continue to advance even as he moves on to bigger and better things. Joe is leaving because he’s won the prestigious Bosch Foundation Fellowship, and in a few weeks he will be moving to Germany for a year. Joe, I’d like to congratulate you, wish you well, and say that I know you’ll do our country proud.

With that I yield back.