



**Chairwoman Marcy Kaptur**  
**Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development**  
**Oversight Hearing on Strategies for Energy and Climate Innovation**  
**February 25, 2021**

Let me extend a warm welcome to our Members, distinguished witnesses, and those listening to this hearing. My goal as Chair of the House Energy and Water Subcommittee is to help our generation embrace a better future for those that follow. We must sustain life on earth and help our country to meet the challenges as we face the dawn of a new era for energy and water.

Over half a century ago, Ohio Senator John Glenn embraced the future in his momentous journey as the first human being to orbit the Earth.

Since that moment, the Earth's place in our vast universe has never been perceived the same. People gained a new perspective on our blue planet suspended in space. Scientist Carl Sagan observed: "...preserve and cherish the pale blue dot; it is the only home we've ever known."

Across our world, that view of Earth from space began to influence the thinking of leaders from all walks of life. More came to be understood about the Earth's ability to sustain itself.

More sophisticated imaging, like ozone monitoring, led to greater understanding of our collective impact on the vital resources essential to sustaining life on earth, none more key than those in our Subcommittee's name – energy and water. Their availability cannot be presumed. We must work together to assure our Earth is protected from the harm that can be caused by mistakes and even ignorance.

Looking at recent events across our country, who could have predicted the perilous winter energy disasters that just struck Texas and Oklahoma? Yes, natural disasters happen, and they do so with alarming regularity these days.

But the severity of what these regions have endured alert us to pay attention to the "why" of what occurred. It appears that existing power systems were not suited or prepared to embrace an energy future that had not been properly imagined.

Similarly, last year, wildfires in California and Oregon were among the largest on record. Arizona experienced 100 days with over 100 degrees. Scientific consensus indicates the Earth is warming at an unsustainable rate. Glaciers and sea ice are melting at historic rates. Our oceans are warming, rising, and acidifying. Humans and human activity are the primary cause.

In the mid-20th century, approximately 150 million people lived in the United States. Today, the U.S. population has more than doubled to over 330 million. Globally, the population growth has risen even faster from 2.5 billion in 1950 to nearly 8 billion now. The cumulative load on Earth and its atmosphere is impacting life itself. We must use what we have learned over the last half century to heal our atmosphere and, in turn, our blue dot.

As America stands at a crossroads in the new energy age, we are here today to explore strategies for energy and climate innovation.

We are lucky to have the Department of Energy – the federal government’s leading agency for research and development of new clean energy technologies – under our jurisdiction.

Technologies developed with DOE funding are already helping address climate change. They have markedly driven down the prices of wind, solar, energy storage, and efficient lightbulbs by 60 to 95 percent since 2008. They have led to widespread deployment and consumer savings.

New innovations will lead to new opportunities. Reversing the impacts of climate change will create good-paying jobs across every state in our country. Already there are more Americans working in energy efficiency and energy production jobs than waiters and waitresses. We must continue to innovate and lead in these areas so our nation is not left behind. As people and communities succeed, so will America.

Our witnesses today will enlighten us with a path forward.