

**Opening Statement of Chairman Greg Walden
Subcommittee on Energy Hearing on:
“State of the Nation’s Energy Infrastructure”
February 27, 2018**

(As prepared for delivery)

Today’s hearing exploring the “State of the Nation’s Energy Infrastructure” is another important step in our commitment to put the needs of consumers first. Energy is truly the driving force powering our economy. Our hearing today is focused on ways to expand, improve, and modernize our infrastructure, so that we can deliver energy to consumers more safely, reliably, and cost-effectively.

This morning, we have an excellent panel of witnesses who will testify on the challenges and opportunities to modernizing our nation’s energy infrastructure. We’ll gather perspectives from the people on the front lines – those who train our workers and design, build, and operate our energy infrastructure. My hope is that their stories can help us identify policy gaps and propose solutions to attract investments to update and build new energy infrastructure.

This committee has been hard at work on ways to modernize our nation’s infrastructure, but there’s more work to be done. This hearing marks our forty-seventh hearing on infrastructure this Congress alone. Twenty-four energy and environment bills have passed the House already, addressing pipeline infrastructure, hydropower licensing, Brownfields, air quality standards, energy efficiency, drinking water, and nuclear waste storage. All of this work is incredibly important for my district in Oregon. These bills will have a direct, positive impact for local economies and communities in my state and across the country. Now that these bills are with the Senate, we’re working with our colleagues and the administration to get them moving and signed into law.

I applaud President Trump for not only recognizing the need to improve all facets of our nation's infrastructure, but for also demonstrating the leadership needed to push forward this major initiative.

While there are many difficult details to work out, I believe there is support for a broad infrastructure bill. Just the other week, I participated in a bipartisan, bicameral infrastructure meeting hosted by President Trump at the White House to discuss our shared priorities for rebuilding our nation's infrastructure.

While much of the conversation around infrastructure has focused on ways to increase federal spending, we should be mindful that most of the nation's energy infrastructure is privately owned and operated.

We all know that financing is a crucial aspect of any infrastructure plan, so we're thinking outside the box to see where we can make the most progress with limited federal funds. We're focused on fixing the regulatory environment, encouraging public-private partnerships, and strengthening our workforce.

Our nation's energy infrastructure – the traditional baseload power plants, windmills, solar panels, hydroelectric dams, pipelines, power lines, fossil fuel production facilities, and import/export terminals – make up the backbone of our economy. With innovation and technological advancements driving change at a rapid pace, it's our responsibility as members of this committee to understand the challenges and opportunities associated with keeping these energy systems operating safely and efficiently.

We've got a lot of work to do, but we're moving in the right direction. With that, I want to thank the witnesses for appearing before us today and I look forward to their testimony.