

**Energy Subcommittee Hearing – February 18, 2021**  
**"A Smarter Investment: Pathways to a Clean Energy Future"**  
**Congressman Michael C. Burgess**  
**Opening Statement**

*As Prepared for Delivery*

Thank you, Chair Rush, I look forward to serving on the Energy Subcommittee with you once again in the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Today's hearing occurs at a critical time in our nation's history. This week, almost 5 million American households were left without electricity across Oklahoma, Texas, and Louisiana as dangerous and record-setting winter weather ravaged the Central United States, blasting sub-freezing arctic air all the way south to the Mexican border. Many types of power production — across all fuel types — went offline.

People were left stranded, with power outages that lasted for days. Other utility services, like water and sewage were also impacted. Tragically, people lost their lives. Americans are rightfully angry and deserve answers.

Given these recent events, I intend to use today's hearing to focus on ways to increase the reliability and resilience of our electric grid. This

is not a partisan issue. When the temperature drops below zero, nobody cares where the electricity comes from — they just need the heat to come on.

As we know, Texas leads the nation in renewable power, and it transitioned faster than any other state. Congress needs to gather the facts and understand the root causes of this energy crisis before speeding ahead with new renewable energy mandates that shift away from a reliable existing fleet.

In recent years, the energy sector has undergone a rapid transformation that has reduced our dependence on foreign energy, helped rescue us from an economic recession, and lowered our nation's emissions. This revolution was not produced by federal spending or mandates, but instead created by America's spirit of innovation and our nation's dynamic, free market economy.

This transformation has brought many benefits to our nation, but those benefits do not eclipse the importance of a stable supply of energy for all Americans. As investments are made in new energy production and

energy infrastructure, the reliability of those systems must always be the priority.

Unfortunately, President Biden's early actions, such as cancelling the Keystone XL pipeline, rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement, and prohibiting new energy production on federal lands, signal a desire to go in the opposite direction.

Let me remind my colleagues that America leads the world in reducing its carbon emissions and that the 2006 Waxman-Markey climate bill would have produced worse results for the environment than the results produced by the free market. These actions will reduce our nation's energy resiliency and hurt our energy workers without any significant impact to global emissions.

We all agree that America deserves a cleaner future, but pursuing a path towards that future while ignoring energy reliability is the wrong approach.

This subcommittee should work together to prioritize the reliability of our power sector. We can pursue methods of expediting clean, American-made energy products. We must remove barriers slowing

innovation to create jobs and provide affordable energy at home. America's energy sector stands ready to meet these challenges, but we can't let the heavy hand of government become an obstacle.

Our subcommittee has significant work ahead this Congress. We can look to America's clean energy future, but we cannot afford to rapidly transition our energy system without assurance of its reliability. We cannot support policies that destroy entire industries or increase America's dependence on foreign sources of energy and critical minerals. I hope we can find bipartisan consensus with those priorities in mind.