

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.**

***Hearing on “AI and the Grid: Meeting Growing Power Demand While Protecting
Ratepayers”***

April 29, 2026

It’s been 15 months since Republicans took control of all levers of power here in Washington, and it’s a nightmare for the American people.

Electricity prices have increased as much as thirteen percent, and the same goes for natural gas prices. American families are now paying well over \$4 for gas at the pump. And all indications are that things will continue getting worse: prices will continue to soar as a result of Trump’s reckless war in Iran and Republicans’ relentless attack against cleaner and cheaper energy. And these actions are resulting in our nation becoming less energy secure.

Making matters worse, data centers fueling artificial intelligence technologies are throwing the grid into a generation crisis. At a time when we need almost all the energy we can get, Republicans have proceeded with their illogical war on clean energy – dedicating themselves to taking vital sources of power off the grid. And American families are paying the price.

Last year, Republicans used reconciliation to wreck our power grid and repeal billions of tax investments and programs that would have financed hundreds of gigawatts of clean, reliable power.

The problem is that I fundamentally find it difficult to trust proposals to fix our problems from the same people who caused those problems in the first place. President Trump promised that he would cut energy bills in half his first year back in office; instead, they are higher than ever.

His so-called “Ratepayer Protection Pledge” isn’t worth the paper it’s written on because it doesn’t have any mechanisms to hold Big Tech companies accountable for their promises. Given this track record, we should all be suspicious of any Republican promise that they can actually prevent Americans’ bills from going up. I don’t believe it.

This is the backdrop to today’s legislative hearing. Our nation’s grid is facing enormous challenges, and those challenges call for big solutions. Unfortunately, I don’t think the bills we will review at today’s hearing meet the moment.

Some of the bills before us today include good ideas. Improving the accuracy of electricity demand may be critical to ensuring that we’re not making families pay for data center-related grid infrastructure that is never needed. Using advanced transmission technologies and

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more efficient conductors to get more out of the existing grid is also a promising idea to keep costs down. And, given the difficulties that AI technologies are creating for the grid, the least we can do is try to ensure the grid is getting something positive out of these technologies too.

I am also pleased we are considering H.R. 6529, from Representative Landsman, which would require FERC to convene federal experts, state regulators, tech companies, and utilities to find pathways to protect American families from rising electricity costs. Ensuring that data centers pay their fair share will take cooperation across all these groups, and we need to ensure that they are engaging with each other and are working together to reduce costs for ratepayers.

While I think some of these bills need tweaks or technical alterations, they are largely small steps in the right direction. But we don't need small steps: we need big steps, because we have big problems.

And I also want to mention that there is one bill that would be a major step in the wrong direction. H.R. 6336, the so-called FAIR Act, is anything but fair. It is a purely partisan attack that would make it harder for us to build out the regional and interregional grid infrastructure that all of us know we need to build faster. The FAIR Act would give red states a free ride so they do NOT pay for the economic and reliability benefits they receive from a buildout of the power grid. The bill is a distraction from the work we should be focused on.

This Committee should be holding a hearing on proposals that could help fix the long-term drivers of the current grid reliability crisis, and make it easier to plan, permit, and pay for the expansion of the power grid.

Unfortunately, Committee Republicans turned down an opportunity to include Representative Peters' SPEED and Reliability Act, a bill that would do just that. Mr. Chairman, I think that's a real missed opportunity, and I'm disappointed that it was not included.

Thank you and I yield back the balance of my time.