

**Opening Statement of Republican Leader Greg Walden
Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change
“Time for Action: Addressing the Environmental and Economic Effects of
Climate Change”
February 6, 2019**

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing on climate change. It is no secret that the Energy and Commerce Committee has the jurisdiction and ability to find a bipartisan path forward to tackle this important issue that confronts not just our nation, but the world. As you know, I spoke out early and forcefully about the unnecessary effort by Speaker Pelosi to create a separate, select committee which lacks any legislative authority. While able members will serve on this panel, it is as redundant as the last one she created more than a decade ago.

With all this activity, it is important to highlight a few fundamentals at the onset. Climate change is real. The need to protect the environment is real. The need to foster a strong U.S. economy and grow American jobs is real. And the need to prepare our communities for the future is real. The Republicans on this committee are ready and

willing to have serious, solutions-oriented discussions about how to address and balance these considerations.

For instance, we believe that a longer conversation about the Democrats' Green New Deal is needed. We have heard about general tenets of the plan for the U.S. – such as all renewable electricity generation by 2030, all zero emission passenger vehicles in just 11 years, a federal job guarantee, and a living wage guarantee. We have serious concerns about the potential adverse economic and employment impacts of these types of measures. At least one analysis has estimated that going to 100 percent renewable energy in the U.S. could cost a minimum of \$5.7 trillion – that sounds like a huge cost for consumers and taxpayers to foot.

Republicans are focused on solutions that prioritize adaptation, innovation, and conservation. Just as America led the world in energy development that has reduced carbon emissions, we want America's innovators to develop the next technologies that will improve the environment and create jobs here at home.

We want a healthy environment for our children, grandchildren, and their children. But we also want the people who live in our districts and in this country today, right now, to have jobs and to be able to provide for their families. These are not mutually exclusive principles. Working together we can develop the public policies to achieve these goals.

As the Republican Leader on the Committee, I will work to promote a better policy vision for the environment, one which:

- supports and accelerates continued technological advances in energy and environmental practices to improve our quality of life;
- ensures a sound regulatory environment, where people have the confidence to invest their money to innovate and create American jobs;
- improves information needed to understand future impacts and provides resources to communities to adapt and prepare for those impacts;

- promotes American workforce development and training in energy-related industries; and,
- recognizes the importance of open and competitive markets; and the role the United States plays as the world's leading energy producer, innovator, and exporter of advanced technologies.

Indeed, Republicans have a track record of supporting policies that protect the environment and ensure energy access. For example, last Congress we supported legislation to promote zero-emissions nuclear energy, and renewable energy including hydropower. Hydropower has great success as a clean energy source in my Oregon district and generates approximately 40 percent of the electricity in my state. Legislation we passed into law last Congress will streamline the permitting process for closed-loop pumped hydropower projects. One such project in my district aims to generate enough power for 600,000 homes in southern Oregon.

We also advanced legislation to promote energy efficiency, grid modernization, energy storage, natural gas, a more resilient electric grid, carbon capture and utilization, and better forest management to address wildfires and limit their air quality impacts.

Oregonians choke on smoke every summer from wildfires that burn across our poorly managed federal forests, filling our skies with ash and polluting our airsheds with carbon dioxide. Managing our forests not only reduces the risk of these catastrophic fires, but the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says](#) that sustainably managing our forests will create the longest sustained carbon mitigation benefit.

And the numbers show that our policies are working – in 2017, U.S. carbon emissions were the lowest they have been since 1992, and they are projected to remain steady in upcoming years, more than 10 percent below 2005 levels.

Unfortunately, the Green New Deal ignores many of these important elements of our energy strategy, and makes it more difficult to reach our shared environmental goals. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today on these topics, particularly Mr. Powell from ClearPath, which has promoted clean energy, advanced nuclear and carbon capture, and Mr. Worthington of the U.S. Energy Association, which has advocated for a diverse energy mix within the United States, and the importance of energy access and affordability around the globe.

When it comes to climate change, Republicans are focused on solutions. That's why we back sensible, realistic, and effective policies to tackle climate change.

What we are deeply concerned about are the Democratic plans we believe will harm American consumers and American jobs by driving up costs and pushing jobs overseas where environmental laws are far more lax. We can do better than old policies rooted only in over-regulation, excessive-taxation, and economic stagnation.

Thank you, Chairman, and I yield back.