

**Republican Leader Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change
“The CLEAN Future Act and Environmental Justice:
Protecting Frontline Communities”**

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As prepared for delivery

Throughout these CLEAN Future Act hearings Republicans have stressed that-- to address climate risks--the policies we develop must strengthen, **not** weaken our communities.

You cannot build better if you're tearing down to do it. Policies must recognize the vital role affordable, reliable energy serves for expanding economic opportunity for enabling new work opportunities, increasing community resilience, for expanding prosperity -- for providing affordable power to homes when they need it most.

And we do this by building on current achievements in energy, in environmental improvements, in economic opportunity, not dismantling them. We've all seen the human toll when economic opportunity abandons communities.

Witnesses in the past have [outlined](#) the harsh economic, social, and physical harm that follows the loss of good blue-collar, middle-class jobs, as factories pull out or power plants close.

Whether the harm is due to lost economic opportunity or not having the opportunity in the first place, we should remove barriers and provide incentives to lift economic prospects for all Americans, but especially for those areas most in need. The legislation before us today covers so much ground, it is easy to overlook some of the ways the CLEAN Future Act harms economic prospects.

We've warned in [previous hearings](#) that mandates like those in this bill will raise electricity rates, sideline small businesses, and increase energy

poverty for those most in need. And consider some of the provisions under review today that would further weaken economic opportunity:

Section 606 of the Clean Future Act prohibits new and renewed permits for projects in census tracts identified as “overburdened”—whether or not the projects contribute to the burdens. There’s no room here for state or local decisions, what workers and communities want.

Amazingly, one trigger for prohibiting permits is set at air emissions levels that are within current air quality standards. This is not the way to foster economic opportunity or improved public health. Another provision, Section 621, creates new regulations on carbon capture and storage for enhanced oil recovery—a key incentive for building out CCS for clean energy.

This provision duplicates existing regulations and imposes impractical permitting requirements that may undermine future development of this technology, and the jobs it will create.

Section 625 establishes a clear Federal role in hydraulic fracturing and forces new requirements on state regulation of hydraulic fracturing – a practice the States have handled without Federal intervention for many decades.

These new changes would upend the regulatory structure that helped drive the shale revolution, transforming American energy security lowering our Greenhouse Gas emissions levels and providing new economic life to scores of communities around the nation.

Add in other provisions of this bill and we’re looking at an economic train wreck—not the way to help frontline communities. We can do better than this.

And we can start by recognizing the tremendous progress we have made as a nation, in terms of environmental improvements under existing state and federal policies. Fine particulate matter is declining, down an average of almost 40% since 2000.

Our air quality levels are five times lower than the global average... seven times lower than China’s and well below France, Germany, Mexico, and Russia, according to the EPA.

And these positive environmental trends will continue, as will the economic and clean energy opportunities, if we don't block the way with convoluted new regulatory policies. Let's focus on incentives to economic development, especially for underserved communities, with ground-up bipartisan policies like opportunity zones.

I'm pleased Mr. Shay Hawkins is joining us this morning to update us on how these policies help communities in need of economic opportunity. And Mr. Derrick Hollie will remind us of the vital role of affordable energy for economic progress—and the risks of heavy regulation on energy.

Mr. Chairman, we can drive clean energy policies, improve economic and environmental health, and foster prosperity for all families. But the ingredients for success here are not more regulations, mandates, and central control that stifles opportunity. Let's recognize that, recognize our successes and build on them. Thank you.