

T&I Member Day Hearing Testimony:

Members of the committee. Thank you for holding this hearing. The district I represent is home to the Tennessee Valley Authority headquarters. The TVA was established by the enactment of the Tennessee Valley Authority Act, which was signed into law by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1933.

The TVA helped bring economic prosperity throughout the Tennessee Valley during the Great Depression. Many of my constituents' ancestors benefitted from the economic development initiatives the TVA still provides.

Though the TVA has a strong historical presence in my region, there is still room for improvement in their daily operations.

TVA is a government-created entity that, at times, resembles a private corporation. For example, the CEO of the TVA makes more than \$8 million per year. I can't think of another government created entity that pays that well.

Decisions by its board are held in secret and are not open to the rate payers of the Valley. There have been numerous plant closings in the Valley; most recently Bull Run and Paradise power plants in Tennessee and Kentucky, respectively. Coal ash residue, which contains toxic chemicals like arsenic, has been found in bodies of water from east to west Tennessee. I fear the cost of the cleanup has been passed on to the rate payers of the Valley.

A primary goal of the TVA is to keep rates low, which is why Congress has yet to sell off any of the Authority's transmission assets to private companies. There's a problem when a public authority is not transparent to the people who are affected the most by its actions.

That is why I have introduced the Tennessee Valley Authority Transparency Act. This bill would open all board and subcommittee meetings to the public.

I have always been an advocate of government transparency, and this bill is a common-sense measure to make sure rate payers throughout the Tennessee Valley are best served. Many people throughout this nation do not trust government. In my view, government is already too big and burdensome. Let's start now to regain the American people's trust. The Tennessee Valley is a good place to start. Thank you and I look forward to any questions the committee may have.