

Congress of the United States
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Small Business
2361 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6515

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members of the Committee on Small Business

FROM: Committee Majority Staff

DATE: August 28, 2026

RE: Subcommittee Hearing Titled: “Fueling the Golden Age: Future Resource Needs and Small Business Opportunity”

On **Wednesday, September 2, 2026, at 10:00 AM ET**, the Subcommittee on Rural Development, Energy, and Supply Chains of the Committee on Small Business will hold a hearing titled “**Fueling the Golden Age: Future Resource Needs and Small Business Opportunity**.” The meeting will convene in Room 2360 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The purpose of this hearing is to examine future resource and workforce needs necessary to support America’s next generation of manufacturing, technology, and industrial growth.

I. Witnesses

- **The Honorable Cody Harris**, Texas House of Representatives, District 8
- **Ted Ellis**, Deputy Director, Energy & the Environment, America First Policy Institute
- **Trevor Higgins**, Senior Vice President, Energy and Environment, Center for American Progress

II. Background

After nearly two decades of relatively flat electricity demand, utilities now project 166 gigawatts of peak-load growth nationally over the next five years, a more than six-fold increase from the 24 gigawatts forecast in 2022.¹ Rising demand is driven by the resurgence of domestic manufacturing, increased electrification, and the development of emerging technologies.² For small businesses, this growth presents significant opportunities to enter new markets, expand operations, and support America’s growing industrial base.

¹ Report, Grid Strategies, Power Demand Forecasts Revised Up for Third Year Running, Led by Data Centers, 3 (Nov. 2025).

² *Id.* 4.

Meeting projected energy demands will require significant expansion of generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure. Analysts project that the U.S. must add capacity at roughly twice its recent rate to keep pace with expected load growth.³ The Trump Administration has made restoring American energy dominance a priority, focusing on expanding domestic energy production to meet growing demand. Further, the administration has also pursued permitting and regulatory reforms to help bring new energy projects online faster and reduce unnecessary costs. The Trump Administration's focus on domestic energy resources and the deployment of advanced nuclear technologies, including small modular reactors, is expected to increase energy supply, lower costs for small businesses, and support broader economic growth and opportunities for small businesses.⁴

Water infrastructure is equally vital to sustained economic growth. Manufacturing and other industrial activities depend on reliable water supplies for production, processing, cooling, and other operations. Without advance planning, new demand can strain local treatment and delivery systems and intensify competition among users.

Finally, a strong workforce will be essential to meeting growing resource needs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects approximately 81,000 electrician openings each year through 2034.⁵ Apprenticeships, technical education, and employer-led workforce training can help small trade businesses compete for energy, water, manufacturing, and technology-infrastructure contracts. Workforce needs are growing alongside broader manufacturing expansion, as reshoring and foreign direct-investment announcements totaled 244,000 manufacturing jobs in 2024, with 88 percent in high- and medium-high-technology sectors.⁶ The Trump Administration's focus on domestic manufacturing, deregulation, and energy dominance is accelerating that trend, creating a growing pipeline of opportunity for small trade businesses across rural America.

III. Conclusion

America's energy and industrial expansion present a significant opportunity for rural communities and small businesses. Reliable, affordable power, adequate water infrastructure, resilient domestic supply chains, and a skilled workforce will help ensure small businesses can participate in and benefit from the investment now reaching communities across the country.

³ Brian Martucci, *ICF sees 25% load growth by 2030, up to 40% price increase*, UTILITY DIVE (May 21, 2025).

⁴ Exec. Order No. 14299, 90 Fed. Reg. 22581 (May 23, 2025).

⁵ *Occupational Outlook Handbook: Electricians*, U.S. BUREAU OF LAB. STAT., <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/construction-and-extraction/electricians.htm> (last visited Aug. 27, 2026).

⁶ Report, Reshoring Initiative, Reshoring Initiative 2024 Annual Report (June 9, 2025).