

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Energy and Power Subcommittee Vote on H.R. 1582, H.R. 1900, and H.R. 83
July 9, 2013**

(As Prepared for Delivery)

In our ongoing effort to protect and create jobs, we are here today to consider three important bills: H.R. 1900, the “Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act” sponsored by Mr. Pompeo; H.R. 1582, the “Energy Consumers Relief Act of 2013” sponsored by Dr. Cassidy; and H.R. 83, sponsored by Ms. Christensen.

As this subcommittee has explored on previous occasions, America is blessed with vast amounts of energy resources, including natural gas. But in order to capitalize on this new energy abundance and create jobs, we need to build new pipeline infrastructure to deliver these robust supplies to new markets and new customers. However, our current permitting process results in significant delays and uncertainty given the number of state and federal agencies that have myriad opportunities to stall approval of the necessary permits. If we are to take advantage of our newfound energy abundance and boost our economy, we must modernize our existing permitting process to align it with current and future energy realities.

That is why I support H.R. 1900, the “Natural Gas Pipeline Permitting Reform Act.” This legislation puts the federal permitting process on a reasonable shot-clock with clear deadlines so all federal and state permitting agencies are held accountable. The certainty provided by this legislation will help natural gas pipeline projects get sited and built without undue delay, while also ensuring such projects are safe and environmentally sound.

Another important piece of energy legislation being considered today is the “Energy Consumers Relief Act.” Under this thoughtful legislation, energy-related regulations issued by EPA that cost more than one billion dollars will finally get the cumulative analysis they warrant. Common sense dictates that we should fully understand the cost of new regulations on jobs and the economy before they are implemented.

Dr. Cassidy’s bill will empower the Department of Energy to take a look-before-you-leap approach to EPA’s energy-related billion dollar rules. Transparency in regulatory costs is a reasonable expectation, and the “Energy Consumers Relief Act” will make sure the EPA provides it. And given the prolonged weakness in the economy and stubbornly high gasoline prices and unemployment rates, it’s a level of scrutiny that is long overdue.

Finally, the subcommittee will consider H.R. 83, which would require the Secretary of the Interior to assemble a team of experts to address the energy needs of the insular areas of the United States and the Freely Associated States through the development of an energy action plan.

I urge my colleagues to support all three of these commonsense energy bills.

###