

Opening Statement
Chairman Bobby L. Rush
Subcommittee on Energy
Energy and Commerce Committee
Hearing on “Building a 100 Percent Clean Economy: Solutions for the U.S. Power Sector”
October 30, 2019

Good morning and I thank you all for joining us at today’s hearing entitled, Building a 100 Percent Clean Economy: Solutions for the U.S. Power Sector.

Today’s hearing is an extension of the Subcommittee’s series focused on expanding our nation’s clean energy economy. Further, it is a continuation of the Committee’s broader objective to identify pathways to a 100 percent clean energy future by 2050, as proposed by Chairman Pallone, Chairman Tonko, and myself.

As we approach the year 2050, our Nation faces unique challenges in its efforts to address growing energy production demands as well as the obligation to limit our contribution to climate change. In the United States, the greatest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, those that are directly linked to human activity, are attributed to the burning of fuels for electricity, transportation, and the production of goods.

The power sector, whose electricity generation is historically dependent on fossil fuels, accounts for nearly 30 percent of all U.S. emissions. In view of this, it is important that the Subcommittee evaluates what can be done to reduce that impact. Therefore, discussions concerning necessary steps to both meet rising energy demands while, at the same time, considering critical technologies to reduce the impact of the power sector’s immense carbon foot print are essential.

Already, diversification within the power generation sector has contributed to a 25 percent decrease in carbon dioxide intensity. The opportunity currently exists to create further reductions by incorporating additional low and zero carbon sources of energy production. Further reductions in carbon dioxide emissions are contingent upon, and made possible by, varying our energy sources.

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, renewables—like wind, nuclear, and solar—can help reduce carbon emissions and produce up to 80 percent of all U.S. electricity generation by 2050. However, in our haste to address the real threat posed by climate change, we must make sure to effectively transition our workforce without leaving minorities and other vulnerable communities behind. My bill, the Blue Collar and Green Collar Jobs Act would accomplish that, but this Subcommittee can still gain much needed insight from our witnesses today on how Congress can make this transition more equitable and just.

So, I welcome each of our witnesses, which includes our distinguished former colleague Jim Matheson, to today's hearing. I look forward to engaging you on the best ways to accomplish these objectives.

And now I recognize my friend and colleague, Ranking Member Upton for his opening statement.