

Opening Statement
Chairman Bobby L. Rush
Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Hearing on “Saving Energy: Legislation to Improve Energy Efficiency and Storage”
February 12, 2020

Today the Subcommittee convenes for a hearing focused on legislative proposals to bolster energy efficiency and energy storage. Through the implementation of these policies, the Committee will boost consumer cost savings, offset energy supply demand, reduce air pollution, and advance job creation.

The flexibility and reliability of our nation’s grid is enhanced by energy storage capabilities. Energy producers use a variety of these economically and environmentally beneficial technologies to store excess energy from power sources. Energy producers later release this stored energy in response to energy generation demand, service disruptions, or non-dispatchable energy generation. Bills up for discussion today, for example H.R. 1744, H.R. 2909, and H.R. 4447, will amplify the deployment of this strategy.

Energy efficiency is an equally important tool that harnesses technology to meet our energy needs through smarter energy use. According to a recent American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy report, enhancing economy-wide efficiency standards could cut both energy use and greenhouse gas emissions in half by 2050. This is why I’m pleased to discuss H.R. 3962, H.R. 5650, and H.R. 5758 at today’s hearing.

Extensive efficiency of residential appliances, lighting systems, and buildings alone would curtail 550 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year. This amounts to the emissions from burning 606 billion pounds of coal. The intensity of energy use is contingent upon geographic location — case in point: Chicago heat waves and winters. However, a typical household may save up to 25 percent on their utility expenses through energy efficiency measures.

In light of this, I remain deeply disturbed by the Department's failure to meet legal obligations for new efficiency standards and puzzled by this Administration’s continued requests to slash funding for related programs. Therefore, I look forward to today’s discussion on these policies that require active participation from the Department of Energy, states, and industry to implement these mechanisms to the benefit of ratepayers and consumers.

I thank my colleagues, both on and off the Committee for their contributions to today’s legislative hearing. With that, I recognize my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Michigan, Ranking Member Upton, for five minutes.