

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery  
of  
Representative Jerry McNerney**

***Hearing on “Legislative Hearing to Strengthen Energy Infrastructure, Efficiency, and  
Financing”***

**June 22, 2022**

Good morning. Today, we are holding a legislative hearing on six bills, authored by Members from both sides of the aisle, focused on updates and upgrades to our nation’s energy infrastructure. As the US and the rest of the world undergoes the energy transition necessary to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, it’s crucial that our existing systems be able to adapt to meet our evolving needs. These six bills present modest changes to Federal programs to make operation smoother and better able meet the needs of energy customers and developers. Two of today’s bills focus on increasing the energy efficiency of homes and appliances, which will be essential for decreasing our energy demand and lowering monthly energy costs for Americans. Another two of the bills make reforms to the way the Federal government finances energy infrastructure, which would improve accessibility and accountability of Federal loan programs. And two of these bills address the reliability of our energy system, which continues to be imperiled by climate disasters, supply chain issues, cyber and physical vulnerabilities, and aging assets. These bills represent a common-sense approach to reforming our energy laws, and I look forward to hearing what our witnesses have to say about them.

First up is H.R.1599, the Securing America’s Critical Minerals Supply Act, authored by our Ranking Member, Mr. Upton. Critical minerals are essential to the growth of renewable energy resources, and onshoring the supply chain will both increase the availability of components and support domestic jobs. This bill draws attention to that need as the energy transition evolves.

We will also discuss H.R.8053, a bipartisan bill from Congressmen Crow, Peters, and Bacon. This bill allows the Department of Energy to enter into contracts or agreements to improve the resilience of portions of our electric infrastructure that are critical to our national defense, and to reduce the vulnerability of this infrastructure. In my opinion, this should be a non-controversial bill, which will allow us to enhance our national security by making long term commitments to energy reliability serving our military installations, without overburdening nearby ratepayers.

Next up, we have two bills focused on energy efficiency: H.R.7947 from the Environment and Climate Change Subcommittee’s Chairman Paul Tonko, this Subcommittee’s Chairman Bobby Rush, and the Chairwoman of the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee Marcy Kaptur, and H.R.7962, offered by Congresswoman Debbie Dingell.

Mr. Tonko’s Weatherization Enhancement and Readiness Act would strengthen the Weatherization Assistance Program, by raising the cap that limits how much assistance households can receive to account for increases in the prices of building materials, and by

ensuring that the households that could most benefit from the weatherization program are able to participate. This program has provided important services for our low-income households for decades, and the proposed changes could ensure that the program continues to be accessible for years to come.

Ms. Dingell's bipartisan bill touches on the energy-water nexus by harmonizing efficiency standards for commercial and residential water heaters, and improving the resilience of our grid by creating a demand response program for residential water heaters. It would also require DOE to issue a rule by the end of 2024 requiring that electric water heaters have demand response capabilities, as long as that requirement is technologically feasible and economically justified. In considering this bill, I hope we will take note of one of the many ways in which energy and water are intertwined, and how energy use is embedded in the water-related appliances in our home.

These bills are two great ideas that will help reduce the strain on our grid while still delivering electricity to our homes and appliances.

Finally, we have two bills that would make common sense tweaks to the Loan Programs Office within the DOE.

The first is a bill from our late colleague, Congressman Don Young of Alaska, H.R.5292, the Energy Accountability Act. If enacted, it would mandate that any borrower that has previously defaulted on a Title 17 loan be barred from receiving any other loan guarantee under that program.

Secondly, H.R.8068, a bipartisan bill from Ms. Leger-Fernandez and this Subcommittee's own Mr. O'Halleran, improves the Tribal Energy Loan Guarantee Program by allowing the DOE to issue loans directly, revitalizing a program that has not been able to issue a single loan in 17 years.

I want to thank all the authors of the bills we are discussing today – and their staffs – for their hard work, and the hard work yet to come. This is the start of the journey on these bills, not the end, and I look forward to the feedback that our witnesses are able to provide today.

And with that, I yield to the Ranking Member, Mr. Upton, for a five-minute opening statement.