

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of**

Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change Chairman Paul D. Tonko

Hearing on “The CLEAN Future Act: Industrial Climate Policies to Create Jobs and Support Working Communities”

March 18, 2021

I grew up and continue to live in a mill town—Amsterdam, New York; formerly one of the largest carpet producing cities in the world.

And when I was young, the mills closed. My grandparents were among the workers who, through no fault of their own, lost their jobs. Those mills went down south and then eventually offshore. And the people and community left behind had little to no support for many, many years.

I have spent my life, along with other community leaders, working to revitalize our city—to build new infrastructure, redevelop waterfront industrial properties, and attract new and innovative businesses. It has taken 60 years, and there is still more work to be done.

These types of economic disruptions have happened before. They are happening right now. And they will continue happening whether or not we pass the CLEAN Future Act. There is always some risk when a community relies on one employer or industry.

We can pretend this is not the case, or we can work together and do better for the people and communities facing this challenge today than was done for my grandparents and my hometown.

With a national commitment, as is proposed in the CLEAN Future Act, we can treat energy workers with respect. We can provide the resources to accelerate local economic redevelopment and diversification. And we can provide fairness for the workers and communities that have powered our country for decades.

The bill proposes a framework for a national energy transition strategy. This has been done for other issues of national importance that cut across several federal agencies—for example, the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the Council on Environmental Quality.

And importantly, this approach recognizes that it is not for me, or anyone else in Washington, to try to dictate these transitions. It must be a community-driven process since each affected community will have different needs, wants, and assets.

The CLEAN Future Act provides federal resources and technical assistance to empower local community leaders to manage their own economic transitions.

This hearing will also examine some of the bill's provisions regarding the industrial sector.

We know the industrial sector is diverse and accounts for a large amount of emissions.

Some subsectors are energy-intensive, trade-exposed, and difficult to decarbonize.

Decarbonizing U.S. industry requires investing in U.S. industry. And investing in our manufacturers is the key to America's long-term, global competitiveness.

The CLEAN Future Act includes several provisions to make those investments. This includes the Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator, which provides access to financing to make investments across numerous sectors in support of our nation's clean energy transition.

The CLEAN Future Act also includes an innovative Buy Clean proposal that leverages public procurement to support low-emissions industrial products.

While over 22% of U.S. climate emissions are from the industrial sector, a small number of facilities make up a very large share of that total.

Many of those products, including cement and steel, are purchased in large quantities by the public sector. In the United States, nearly half of all cement and a fifth of steel is purchased with tax dollars.

These products are critical to our goals of rebuilding America's infrastructure, and we have the opportunity to support building with cleaner, more innovative materials than ever before.

Buy Clean brings transparency to the market.

It standardizes how to calculate embodied emissions of products, so that the private sector and state and local governments can make informed decisions about what they purchase.

It also supports federal leadership by requiring federal use of products with the proposed Climate Star label, a voluntary label similar to the popular Energy Star and Water Sense programs.

Buy Clean leverages things that are already occurring in the private sector through Environmental Product Declarations, while seeking to improve data quality, guard against unfair foreign competition, and reward investments in U.S. manufacturing.

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The CLEAN Future Act's industrial sections are critical to the growth and retention of U.S. manufacturing jobs and promotion of markets for new and innovative products.

And the worker and community title is critical to fulfilling our commitment that no one is left behind during the energy transition.

I believe these are areas where we should be able to find bipartisan support. I am looking forward to today's testimony and hope we can work together to improve these sections of the Committee's proposal.