

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery  
of**

**Subcommittee on Environment, Manufacturing, and Critical Minerals Ranking Member  
Paul D. Tonko**

***Hearing on Republicans' Attacks on Renewable Energy***

**April 26, 2023**

I am always grateful whenever this subcommittee can convene; however, I find the approach from my Republican colleagues this morning regrettable. First and foremost, this hearing's premise completely fails to recognize the underlying reason why the United States, and frankly the world, is pursuing a clean energy transition.

The combustion of fossil fuels is the overwhelming driver of greenhouse gas emissions, which are responsible for climate change. We know the consequences of unmitigated climate change will be significant. It will harm our environment, public health, economy, and national security. Just yesterday, EPA released a new report which found that climate change is expected to increase incidences of asthma, Lyme disease, and emergency room visits for American children.

This is merely the latest data point in a large body of scientific literature that is clear— if we do not respond to climate change effectively, we will be a poorer, sicker, and less competitive nation. And while my Republican colleagues are suggesting we are rushing toward a clean energy transition, I question whether they support the transition at all, on any timeline. It does not sound like they do.

So, if people take issue with my support for urgency in transforming our economy to one with less pollution, this urgency is because the scientific community is telling us that we must rapidly and drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions. But I am not naïve. I appreciate that doing anything on the scale on which science tells us is necessary will have challenges. And I am not afraid to have honest discussions about what those challenges are and how we can overcome them.

We need clean energy infrastructure to be able to be built faster. We need to take a long-term view of our critical mineral needs and find ways to meet those needs ethically and sustainably.

I would love the opportunity to work across the aisle to solve these challenges and enable the United States to experience the economic boom that will come from dominating global clean energy industries.

Unfortunately, today we are going to hear a lot of complaints about clean energy technologies and very few solutions. It honestly does not sound like Republicans even want to do anything about China's lead in these critical industries.

House Democrats, on the other hand, are supporting policies that will enable American businesses to make the U.S. the global leader. Many of these efforts were enacted last Congress in

the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. And thanks to the incentives included in those laws, the private sector is already responding.

There have been announcements for hundreds of billions of dollars to build manufacturing facilities to develop domestic supply chains for solar, wind, EVs, semiconductors, and batteries, including the production, processing, and recycling of critical minerals. In addition to responding to the real and urgent threat of climate change, these investments will result in millions of new, well-paying American jobs.

So, we have two options. We can keep complaining; pretending or hoping the energy transition is not going to happen, and believing that to the extent it is, it will exclusively benefit China. Or we can do something about it. We can support American businesses that want to build the clean energy economy here in the United States and export those American-made technologies all over the world.

I think the choice is clear. Evidently, our colleagues in the majority do not. This week they will vote to repeal key provisions from the IRA, including incentives that are widely supported by the private sector. I believe in American ingenuity. We have the best researchers, entrepreneurs, and skilled workforce in the world.

I am confident we can outcompete China—and every other country—to be the world leader in the clean energy industries that will not only be part of addressing climate change but will also dominate the global economy in the decades to come. I wish my Republican colleagues shared my confidence in American businesses' and workers' ability to compete.

And while Republicans are seemingly content to cede control of these critical industries to China without a fight, Democrats will continue to support the development of domestic supply chains and empower American companies to innovate solutions.

As we move forward, I hope we will have an opportunity to move past the criticisms of clean energy and work together on actual policy solutions that will help us overcome the challenges of transforming our economy and accelerating the clean energy transition.

The health, economy, and national security of future generations depends on us getting this right.