

Opening Statement
Chairman Frank Pallone, Jr.
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Energy
Hearing on “Investing in America’s Energy Infrastructure: Improving Energy Efficiency and
Creating a Diverse Workforce”:
April 10, 2019

Today we’re here to discuss legislation that invests in making our nation’s infrastructure more energy efficient. This important investment will create good-paying jobs, save consumers money and help us combat climate change by reducing carbon pollution.

Countries across the globe are investing in energy efficiency, and it’s making a difference. According to the International Energy Agency, the world would have used 12 percent more energy in 2016 had it not been for efficiency gains achieved since 2000. That’s comparable to adding another European Union to the global energy market.

A critical piece of infrastructure includes making homes, buildings, cities and manufacturing facilities more energy efficient. Efficiency work supports thousands of good-paying jobs at small businesses in every state. And weatherizing homes or retrofitting public buildings saves money and supports our efforts to address climate change.

The eight bills before us will increase energy efficiency, develop a modern energy workforce and strengthen energy security.

H.R. 2043, the Home Owner Managing Energy Savings (HOMES) Act of 2019, introduced by Reps. Welch and McKinley, provides cash rebates of up to \$5,000 to homeowners for performing retrofits that achieve home energy savings.

H.R. 2041, introduced by Rep. Tonko, Chairman Rush and Rep. Kaptur, would also help homeowners save money and create jobs. This bill increases funding for the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Weatherization Assistance Program to \$350 million annually and modernizes the program.

Technology can also be a driver for increased energy efficiency, and Reps. McNerney, Welch and Kinzinger have introduced bills that analyze and support new technologies in smart buildings and water systems.

The Subcommittee will also review two bills that reauthorize grant programs to assist states and local governments in making public infrastructure more energy efficient. Reps. Stanton and Veasey introduced H.R. 2088, which increases funding for the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant Program. This program provides grants to states and local communities to assist their efforts to reduce fossil fuel emissions and conserve energy. This is something that has been a priority for mayors and local elected officials around the country, in large part because it funds infrastructure that will save communities money.

Similarly, H.R. 2119, introduced by Rep. Kelly, increases funding for DOE grants to improve the efficiency of public buildings.

Both programs provide critical support to local communities that often lack the resources to take on large scale public efficiency-related projects.

We should also look at investing in the skilled workers who manufacture equipment and build and operate plants. Chairman Rush's Blue Collar to Green Collar Jobs Development Act establishes a comprehensive, nationwide program at DOE to improve education and training for jobs in energy-related industries.

Finally, we have H.R. 2114, the Enhancing State Energy Security Planning and Emergency Preparedness Act, introduced by Chairman Rush and Ranking Member Upton. This bill reauthorizes the State Energy Program at \$90 million per year and allows states to use the funds to implement a State Energy Security Plan. The bill passed the House by voice vote during the last Congress and I'm hopeful we can get it to the President's desk before the end of this one.

I commend the bill sponsors for their work on these important issues and thank Mr. Simmons for appearing before the committee for the second time this year.

I yield back the balance of my time.