

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

I would like to welcome everyone to today’s hearing entitled “Investing in America’s Energy Infrastructure: Improving Energy Efficiency and Creating a Diverse Workforce.”

This hearing will focus on a series of bills designed to make Americans’ homes, buildings and energy infrastructure more efficient and cost-effective, while also investing in a diverse workforce to build, operate, and manage this infrastructure.

Unfortunately, our colleague Mr. Welch had to return to Vermont and will miss today’s hearing but as we all know he has been a strong supporter of the HOMES Act and Smart Building Acceleration Act and he regrets not being able to speak on those two measures today.

Most of today’s bill enjoy bipartisan support and I would like to thank Ranking Member Upton for working with my office in cosponsoring HR 2114, the Enhancing State Energy Security Planning and Emergency Preparedness Act.

This bill would provide much-needed assistance to State Energy Offices to plan for and respond to energy disruptions from both physical and cyber threats, and I look forward to moving it forward.

While I support each of the bills before us today, I want to concentrate my remarks on HR 1315, the Blue to Green Collar Jobs Act, which continues to be one of my top priorities.

HR 1315 is a jobs bill designed to train underserved groups, including women, minorities, veterans, unemployed energy workers, and returning citizens, among others, for the energy jobs and careers of the present and future.

Today marks the second hearing on this important bill, providing an opportunity to hear directly from DOE, as my Republican colleagues have requested.

It is my hope that following this hearing, the minority side will finally accept my repeated offers to work with my office on this bill as we move it through the legislative process.

Despite their refusal to work with me following the first hearing on this bill, my office has made several changes to the bill to strengthen it and make it more inclusive.

In addition to opening up the grant program for training in nuclear energy and carbon capture and storage, we have also clarified that grants and assistance would be made available to labor unions and qualified youth and conservation corps.

We strengthened the reporting requirements and accountability measures for evaluating performance and impact, while also streamlining the definition for underrepresented groups throughout the bill and adding language to prevent the duplication of programs at DOE.

Relying on the technical assistance comments we received from DOE from both the current and previous administrations, I am confident that the program established in HR 1315 will go a long way in producing actual results, in the form of jobs filled, rather than the ceaseless talk and planning stages that has too often been the norm.

It is my hope that following today's hearing my Republican colleagues will finally agree to discuss actual substance with my office so we can move this much-needed bill forward with bipartisan support.

As we have heard time and time again in numerous hearings on this topic, there are tens of thousands of jobs available right now, today, and employers are begging for trained, qualified candidates to fill those openings.

My office remains ready and willing to work with any Member to address any legitimate concerns that will ultimately help to put thousands of hardworking yet overlooked and underserved Americans back to work.

I look forward to hearing from today's panel of DOE officials on all of the bills here before us, and now I would like to call on my friend and colleague, Ranking Member Upton for his opening statement.

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