

Opening Statement
Chairman Bobby L. Rush
Subcommittee on Energy
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Hearing on “Oversight of FERC: Ensuring Its Actions Benefit Consumers and the
Environment”
June 12, 2019

I want to thank all of the FERC Commissioners for appearing before the Subcommittee this morning to discuss critical issues related to the governance of the of the nation’s electric grid.

In the last oversight hearing this Subcommittee held last year, I made it clear that I did not support FERC putting its thumb on the scale to ambiguously prop up coal and nuclear facilities as the 2017 DOE NOPR proposed.

In that same hearing I also stated that elected officials in the states should have the authority to choose the type of energy sources within their portfolios that would most benefit their constituents.

To this point, we have seen my home-state of Illinois act as a national leader in enacting legislation to promote renewables and nuclear power as safe, reliable, carbon-free sources of energy.

The bipartisan Future Energy Jobs Act, passed in 2016, along with more recent proposals by Governor Pritzker, would move my state towards a cleaner, greener, more sustainable energy future, and I do not want to see FERC stand in the way of that progress.

However, FERC’s ruling on the PJM capacity market would undo this historic progress and make it harder to achieve my state’s clean energy goals.

It is extremely important that the Commission works to unveil a market structure that allows for individual states to make decisions regarding the makeup of their energy portfolios that helps to address climate change, provides reliable energy, and keeps prices affordable.

One of the biggest challenges facing FERC is how to integrate more renewable energy and distributed energy resources into the grid and putting forth rules of the road to help accomplish these goals.

Consumers are demanding this type of change and it is important that FERC works as a partner to make this happen, rather than as another obstacle standing in the way.

The Commission must make sure that consumer voices are heard throughout the regional transmission organizations and that the interests of the public are protected through the agency’s decisions.

I applauded the Commission's Storage and Distributed Energy Resource (DER) Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR) issued back in November 2016, and Order 841 issued in February 2018, directing RTOs and ISOs to update market rules so that storage could participate.

However, we are now in June 2019, and it is past time for the Commission to issue a final decision on this issue.

So I look forward to engaging with the Commissioners on these important issues, including allowing states to dictate energy portfolios that benefit their constituents, integrating more renewables into the grid through transmission, finding a way for distributed energy resources to participate in the capacity markets, and making sure that consumer voices are heard and respected throughout the regional transmission organizations.

How the Commission moves forward on each of these issues will have a dramatic impact on the nation's energy portfolio and our ability to combat climate change moving forward and I will be watching closely to how the agency responds to each of these issues.

Now, let me recognize my friend and colleague from Michigan, Ranking Member Upton for his opening statement.

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