

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of**

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations Ranking Member Kathy Castor

Hearing on “Microvast and More: Oversight of President Biden’s Energy Spending Spree”

June 21, 2023

We continue to hear good news about opportunities that are emerging across the country thanks to the landmark Inflation Reduction Act, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and the CHIPS & Science Act. These laws are already having an incredible impact – creating good-paying jobs, lowering energy costs for our neighbors, and bringing manufacturing back to the United States.

These investments are smart and are accelerating the use of American-made clean energy that is cheaper and more sustainable without involving supply chains controlled by foreign adversaries like the Chinese Communist Party. And we are freeing ourselves from Big Oil companies and utilities that keep fuel prices high and put profits over people. Through our targeted investments, we’re building a clean economy that benefits everyone and empowers communities.

Today, we have an opportunity to learn more about an important part of IRA and BIL implementation at the U.S. Department of Energy. The Office of Manufacturing and Energy Supply Chains—or MESC—is a new office tasked with managing some of these crucial investments that Democrats made last Congress.

MESC oversees initiatives to boost critical minerals, process the minerals in the U.S. rather than China, manufacture batteries in America manufacturing, and recycle those batteries here. Meanwhile, local workforce development initiatives, apprenticeship so workers can learn a new skill or trade. We must ensure that American workers are ready to take advantage of career opportunities created by these investments. That’s why Democrats included so many Buy American and Build American policies in the IRA and BIL.

And it’s working. The IRA and the BIL have already attracted over \$240 billion in new investments across 31 states like new battery plants, electric vehicle manufacturing plants - and created 142,000 jobs. These are good-paying jobs that often do not require a college degree that strengthen communities while helping us tackle the climate crisis. It’s a little ironic that most of these investments and jobs are happening in areas represented by the Republicans who opposed the IRA and BIL. That’s okay, we are all in this together, and I trust that over the next decade, businesses and companies will invest more to support new manufacturing in the U.S. and modernize our infrastructure – give our neighbors back home more stability, more security.

It is important to recognize that offshoring manufacturing jobs and supply chains did not happen overnight and bringing them back will not happen overnight either. For decades, the

Chinese Communist Party poured resources into their manufacturers an early lead in the global energy supply chain and clean energy. We did not make the same investments, which resulted in missed opportunities. We are making up for that now with smart, long-term investments in critical mineral production and processing, and advanced manufacturing. These investments and American ingenuity will not only allow us to catch up to the CCP but will also make us a world leader in clean and renewable energy, new electric cars and trucks, and industrial manufacturing to lower the costly climate pollution that is wreaking havoc in our communities.

Thankfully, DOE is also no stranger to managing and mitigating investment risk. MESC uses a rigorous and efficient vetting process to comprehensively analyze project-specific risks and tailor measures to mitigate those risks. MESC continues to conduct the proper due diligence process to protect taxpayer funds and it is working how it should.

Unfortunately, I don't think my Republican colleagues agree. And I am concerned that they have already given up on supporting American workers and competing in the global clean energy supply chain. Just last month, Republicans held a hearing where they simultaneously expressed satisfaction about Microvast's rejected application and skepticism that the United States could ever compete with companies that are beholden to the Chinese Communist Party.

It is disappointing that after years of complaining about our country's reliance on the CCP, Republicans are betting against investments in our future, and against American workers and manufacturers. Last Congress, they took every opportunity to oppose major investments made by the Inflation Reduction Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Despite their opposition of these historic investments at every turn, the communities they represent are the primary beneficiaries. Well over half of the clean energy projects that have moved forward since the passage of the IRA have been in districts represented by House Republicans. Even with the billions of dollars invested in Republican districts, Republicans have spent the entire Congress—nearly six months—in the majority trying to undo the very investments that support American innovation and competitiveness.

Instead of trying to find ways to undermine important federal programs, or holding our economy hostage through manufactured crises, let's turn the page and work together to help our neighbors back home and the American people. Together, we can do the constructive oversight that helps federal programs succeed. Unless we invest in our future, we will continue to fall behind and miss yet another opportunity to be a leader in clean energy supply chains.

Thank you, I yield back.