

**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 “American Energy Expansion: Strengthening Economic, Environmental, and  
National Security”***

**January 31, 2023**

Thank you, Madam Chair.

First, I want to congratulate you, as well as Chairman Johnson for taking on leadership of the Environment Subcommittee.

I have had the privilege of working with the two previous Republican leaders of the Subcommittee, John Shimkus and David McKinley.

During that time, we certainly had our disagreements.

But we also found issues where we could go beyond partisanship and work together for the benefit of our constituents’ public health and the environment.

So, whether it is drinking water, brownfields, harmful air pollution, or the many other issues under the Subcommittee’s jurisdiction, I hope we will be able to find policies where we can work together.

And as we begin to consider how our nation can improve our energy security, foster innovation, and become the global leader in the energy economy of the future, I believe there have been great strides made by Congress in the past several years.

In the 116<sup>th</sup> and 117<sup>th</sup> Congresses, this Committee played an instrumental role in the development and enactment of several historic energy and environmental laws, including the Energy Act of 2020, the AIM Act to phasedown hydrofluorocarbons, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act.

IIJA included \$62 billion for DOE clean energy investments, including programs that will make our electric grid smarter and more resilient, build a domestic battery manufacturing and recycling supply chain, and support the development of cutting-edge industries through hydrogen and DAC hubs.

The IRA built upon that down payment with nearly \$370 billion in funding for DOE, EPA clean air programs, an expansion and extension of a wide range of tax incentives, and other climate and clean energy investments.

These efforts took our long-term national energy security seriously, positioning the United States to become the leader in many of the energy technologies and supply chains that will come to dominate the global energy system over the next several decades.

And we are already starting to witness the benefits of this long-term commitment to a clean energy future.

More and more private sector companies are making plans to manufacture and deploy clean energy technologies across the country.

Electric vehicles, semiconductors, solar components, batteries, offshore wind turbines, and electrolyzers are all part of this growing effort to create new industries here at home.

It has been estimated that the IRA could result in 9 million jobs over the next decade.

And many investments will support the deployment of affordable clean energy solutions, resulting in major savings for American consumers.

These economic and job creation benefits are of course only part of the story.

There will also be a significant reduction of pollution, which will mean fewer hospital visits and missed days of school and work.

Reducing climate and traditional pollution will make us a healthier and more productive society as we continue to fight to avoid the worst potential consequences of global climate change.

But we know even after the IRA and IIJA there is still much more work to be done.

So, as we consider how to best build upon these historic bills, I would caution that creating loopholes in our nation's environmental laws for the benefit of polluting industries will not improve our long-term national energy security.

On the contrary, our environmental laws can be a driver of innovation, complementing the investments we have already made to support the development and deployment of next-generation technologies.

I want to welcome a great public servant to the Committee, Dr. Ana Unruh Cohen, who can advise us on how to build upon the progress of the past four years.

Dr. Unruh Cohen and former Select Committee Chairwoman Kathy Castor played a critical role in the climate and clean energy successes of the 117<sup>th</sup> Congress.

I can think of no one better to help us understand where we have come from, what we have achieved, and what is left to do to transition our nation— and our planet— to a more just and sustainable energy system.

Thank you, Dr. Unruh Cohen for joining us today.

And Madam Chair, I want to thank you for making this our first hearing of the new Congress.

The American people should know more about the work that has been done to make our country less reliant on economically volatile and polluting industries.

And soon we will be able to provide more information to our constituents and local businesses about how to take advantage of the generous tax credits and rebates in the IRA.

I look forward to having many more opportunities to share that information with the public in the months ahead.

With that, I yield back.