

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr.

Subcommittee Markup of 6 Bills

March 6, 2024

Today the Subcommittee is finally holding a markup on pipeline safety, more than five months after the most recent pipeline safety reauthorizations expired. Unfortunately, once again all our Republican majority has to offer today is a reckless, partisan bill that has very little to do with safety and everything to do with gutting environmental reviews to build more pipelines. This is in stark contrast to the bipartisan bill passed by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee late last year.

The Subcommittee is also considering five extreme, anti-energy efficiency bills that stand no chance of becoming law. After today, this Subcommittee will have marked up 37 bills this Congress and only one has been led by a Democrat. Last week we successfully moved our nuclear package through the House, but that bipartisan effort has been an anomaly among the barrage of hyper-partisan bills that this subcommittee has moved forward this Congress.

I cannot emphasize enough – it did not have to be this way. The issues before us today used to be bipartisan issues. Republicans used to work with us on pipeline safety. In fact, the Republicans on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee did just that. Republicans used to work with us on energy efficiency. Democrats are willing to continue working in a bipartisan fashion on these vital issues, but the Republican majority’s actions have told us all we need to know – that they have no interest in passing durable legislation that can make it to the President’s desk. They are only interested in scoring political points, even if it means undermining pipeline safety or raising Americans’ energy bills. And, as a result, none of these bills will ever become law.

Let us start with the Republicans’ so-called “pipeline safety” bill. Throughout this Congress, Republicans have shirked their duty to reauthorize the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration’s, or PHMSA’s, pipeline safety responsibilities. They never held an oversight hearing. They never made an effort to sit down and discuss shared priorities. Instead, they simply circulated a partisan draft bill focused more on building pipelines than safety, mere *weeks* before PHMSA’s authorization expired.

Reauthorizing pipeline safety programs and moving a bipartisan bill takes collaboration, communication, and good-faith negotiation. None of that has occurred here. Even now, Republicans remain completely unwilling to work with us in addressing their bill’s poison pill provisions that would gut environmental reviews, allow pipeline companies to override state decisions, and recklessly bulldoze through the pipeline permitting process to allow industry to build as many pipelines as it wants. Even more radically, their bill would slash authorizations

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for pipeline safety activities by \$42 million per year, or nearly 20 percent. It would fund PHMSA at levels \$22 million *below* the bipartisan spending bill that we are set to pass this week. In other words, this bill asks PHMSA to do more with less. It is singularly focused on building more pipelines.

I want to be clear – a vote for this bill in its current form is a vote to make pipelines more dangerous. Demanding that PHMSA regulate more pipelines with less money is a recipe for pipeline disaster, not pipeline safety. Last year, 22 Americans died in pipeline-related incidents. Any pipeline safety legislation must be exclusively focused on safety and how to get more resources to PHMSA's programs, not less.

In addition to this dangerous pipelines bill, Republicans have included in today's markup five bills gutting efficiency standards for Americans' household appliances. These bills did not receive a legislative hearing. We did not even receive the text for these bills until late last week, and we have not received any expert witness testimony on them.

What we do know is that these five bills are deliberately designed to obstruct the Department of Energy's appliance efficiency program. They rely on the same old tricks to slow down and burden an already rigorous energy efficiency standards-setting process. DOE already has a thorough process to set standards for household appliances, and that process already includes assessing whether new standards are technologically feasible and economically justified. The fact is that energy efficiency standards are a popular, commonsense, low-cost tool to save Americans money on their energy bills. Collectively, the Biden Administration's past and planned energy efficiency actions will save Americans \$570 billion over the next 30 years. That is significant savings for families.

What's even more absurd is that four out of these five anti-efficiency bills target appliance standards that were included in recent consensus recommendations from both appliance manufacturers and advocates. Meaning Republicans are targeting efficiency standards that industry supports.

All of the bills on today's markup are nothing more than bad faith messaging bills designed to help Republicans and their corporate polluter friends – not American families. These bills have no future, and they prove just how far the Republican majority has strayed from the kind of thoughtful bipartisanship we have historically seen on these important issues.

And with that I yield back the balance of my time.