

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Subcommittee on Energy Ranking Member Kathy Castor

Markup of 8 Bills, Subcommittee on Energy

June 24, 2026

Household electric bills have risen 18% in the United States since January 2025, and the war in Iran has inflicted additional economic pain on our neighbors back home. Gas Buddy said yesterday that gas prices in Florida are averaging \$3.89 a gallon – nearly a dollar higher than before the war started.

So, it's clear that we need to work together to lower energy costs. Americans are hurt by the waste of time and money when the Administration pays companies \$2.5 billion to abandon their offshore wind projects – many of which were already under construction – and spends another \$700 million to prop up dying coal plants. In this affordability squeeze, it makes no sense for the President to cancel or stall 382 clean energy projects.

If Republicans want to get serious about addressing our energy affordability crisis, I hope they'll work with us on real solutions to these challenges.

I am glad that my Republican colleagues have finally joined us in putting forward a proposal to protect working families from the costs of AI data center energy infrastructure – the Ratepayer Protection Act.

Last week, we saw FERC also recognize the importance of these efforts as they ordered regional grid operators to help large energy users connect more quickly to the grid. I want to commend FERC for finding unanimous, bipartisan agreement to protect consumers while delivering transparency, reliability, and innovation.

However, remember that FERC's actions will not help the one-third of Americans who live outside of an electricity market. We need to make sure all of our nation's grid operators are playing by fair rules, not just some of them.

But FERC outlined what the solutions are. Grid-enhancing technologies, which allow us to get more out of the existing grid that we've already paid for. Advanced load flexibility, which can limit the need for grid upgrades and reduce power bills for everyone. And smarter planning – reducing project speculation and improving grid studies.

Now, it's Congress's turn to build on that work. I appreciate the inclusion of my Expediting Generator Interconnection Procedures Act in today's markup – and I hope we can work in a bipartisan way to move it forward to a markup before the full committee and beyond.

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We can't afford to wait. We need Congressional action, in this Committee, to make the targeted policy reforms to how we plan, permit, and pay for transmission that can unlock the energy growth that our country needs.

We need to do more to measure and increase grid utilization, which could save Americans more than \$100 billion over the next decade. We need to help deploy virtual power plants – leveraging the innovative new technologies like smart thermostats and batteries already in communities across the country to provide grid reliability faster and at lower cost.

We need to do more to ensure tech companies meet their promises to not only pay for energy infrastructure, but also power their data centers with cleaner, cheaper energy and battery storage.

Today's hearing also includes a long overdue reauthorization of our pipeline safety program. While the bill is still incomplete, I appreciate that my Republican colleagues are working with us, and hope that we can come to a bipartisan agreement that protects the American people, not just oil and gas special interests.

Let me be clear. The bills we're discussing today will not address all the challenges we face with the high cost of energy and upgrading our aged, disjointed electric grid – but they take an important step in the right direction.

I hope that my Republican colleagues will continue to work with us to deliver clean, reliable energy that can power a 21st century economy and lower costs for Americans.

I yield back.