

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery  
of  
Subcommittee on Energy  
Ranking Member Kathy Castor**

***Hearing on “American Energy Dominance: Dawn of the New Nuclear Era”***

**January 7, 2026**

Under Republican leadership, household electricity costs are up 13% and more than 80 million Americans are struggling to pay their utility bills. Over the next five years, electricity use in the United States is expected to increase by 32%. What's working right now to meet that new demand? Solar, storage, and wind. Through November, 92% of new US power capacity added last year was solar, batteries, and wind. Growing solar and wind resources exceeded all new electricity demand globally in the first three quarters of 2025.

Unfortunately, House Republicans are entering the new year with the same old playbook. They should actually listen to what power developers are saying. Developers aren't building new nuclear plants – they're building solar and batteries.

To be clear – Congress and the Administration can and should both act to help the country deploy more nuclear energy. Nuclear energy plays an important role – our existing fleet of reactors provide about 20% of US electricity generation. For too long, Republicans have supported nuclear energy in theory, but failed to follow through as soon as nuclear power starts to compete with their fossil fuel friends.

As part of the House's version of the Big Ugly Bill last year, every Republican on this committee voted to cut back the tax credit to support existing nuclear plants. Republicans ultimately rescinded billions in Loan Programs Office (LPO) credit subsidies as part of their Big Ugly Bill, which could have been used to support advanced nuclear financing. All of this occurs as LPO is on its third temporary leader, without a single official nomination for director. And reports indicate that the office lost as much as 60% of its staff due to voluntary resignations and DOGE cuts.

Nuclear power requires regulatory certainty – which is actively being undermined by the Administration's reckless and illegal attacks on energy projects and on the independence of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which oversees the safety of our nation's nuclear plants. As nuclear companies watch the Republicans cancel loans for transmission lines, pull permits for offshore wind projects already under construction, and completely upend the regulatory framework that their industry depends on, why should they trust the federal government to be a reliable partner?

Meanwhile, China is dominating the buildout of new nuclear power plants, hosting nearly half of the reactors currently under construction globally. We need to align our domestic and foreign energy policy priorities to compete, and we need to ensure that our safety framework is seen as a gold standard across the entire globe. The US should be working with partners and allies to deploy nuclear energy around the world.

But instead, the Trump Administration is pursuing a foreign policy agenda fixated on capturing other countries' oil reserves – all to produce more oil that, in the President's own words, will be shipped to China.

If we want to get serious about deploying nuclear energy in this country, we need to recognize that it's complementary to renewable energy, not a silver bullet. The buildout of nuclear energy will also fail if we don't build out a transmission grid that can move that energy to where it's needed. We need financing to help us build orderbooks of reactors – standardized deployments of at least 5-10 reactors with the same design that help us learn, decrease costs, and catalyze commercial liftoff.

And most importantly, we need confidence in the safety of the reactors. If the American public loses that confidence, then the industry will wither. And right now, the Trump Administration is doing everything within its power to shake that confidence.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today about how we can address these issues. But we can't pretend that it's business as usual.

I yield back.