

**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery**  
**of**  
**Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security**  
**Ranking Member Diana DeGette**

*Hearing on “America’s Future: Leading a New Era of Energy Dominance, Security, and Environmental Stewardship”*

**December 5, 2023**

Thank you, Chairman Duncan. With the start of COP28 last week and international climate negotiations already well underway, we must focus on how the United States can continue to lead the world’s clean energy transition. As a nation, we have taken tremendous steps in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions. Investments like the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure law are how we must approach energy security, leadership, and environmental stewardship. And we must ensure we fully fund both transformational laws enacted under the Biden administration. Our actions have improved health and economic outcomes for some of our most disadvantaged communities, while producing cutting-edge technology and climate solutions for the world.

But – according to the Fifth National Climate Assessment –without deep reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, the risk of intensifying harmful climate impacts will only continue to grow. How do we do that? There are several ways. But one of the most critical: We must continue to target methane emissions. According to EPA, methane concentrations have more than doubled in the last two centuries, largely due to human activity. And as we know, methane is the second largest greenhouse gas contributor to climate change, while also being 28 times more potent than CO<sub>2</sub>.

Thankfully, under President Biden, the U.S. continues to lead in the fight against methane emissions. On Saturday at COP, the administration announced new methane regulations to sharply reduce methane and other air pollutants from the oil and gas industry. The rule would prevent an estimated 58 million tons of methane emissions from leaking into our atmosphere from 2024 to 2028. Additionally, the many investments from the Inflation Reduction Act – including the Methane Emissions Reduction Program, or “MERP” – will put the U.S. on track to meet our commitments under the Global Methane Pledge. And so far during COP, in a big diplomatic win, additional countries have already signed on to the Global Methane Pledge. I am hopeful these commitments will turn into concrete action, because addressing methane emissions is the quickest way to combat climate change and protect public health.

Now, as Chairman Duncan mentioned, our Subcommittee has worked in a bipartisan manner to move legislation updating the regulation and deployment of nuclear energy, named the Atomic Energy Advancement Act. Nuclear energy is currently responsible for almost half of the

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carbon-free electricity we create in the U.S. It is a part of our clean energy transition toolbox. And already during COP, the U.S. joined the new Net-Zero Nuclear Initiative, which is a commitment to tripling global nuclear capacity by 2050. Our bipartisan bill could possibly be some of the first steps in supporting this new global commitment.

I do not believe nuclear energy is the “silver bullet” that will solve the climate crisis. We must ensure that new nuclear power reactors are safe and protective of public health, and that we have a strategy to dispose of spent fuel. But the bill we are putting forward takes commonsense bipartisan steps to improve our nuclear industry while still ensuring our nation’s reactors are safe and secure. So, I look forward to considering the bill before the Full Energy and Commerce Committee in markup later this afternoon.

I have made this point many times in these hearings, but it cannot be overemphasized: Combatting the climate crisis requires us to drastically reduce our emissions. Every single report coming out reiterates that point. And the predominate way to achieve that is to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels. Unfortunately, the majority’s proposed solution is the Lower Energy Costs Act (H.R. 1), which is not a viable climate solution. H.R. 1 would increase domestic oil production by two million barrels a year and natural gas production by around 10 percent. If it was a viable proposal, the House of Representatives would have transmitted it to the Senate in March when it was passed in our Chamber. However, eight months later, the bill remains in the House. Our investment needs to be in the development and deployment of zero-carbon energy, NOT increasing oil and natural gas production and reliance.

Because the United States is historically the highest emitter of greenhouse gases, I believe we have an obligation to lead the clean energy transition. Investments like the IRA and the IIJA are how we show the world we are serious about our commitments. Though there is disagreement on how we lessen our output of greenhouse gas emissions, I look forward to discussing the importance of U.S. leadership in the supply and delivery of energy.

I yield back.