

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

Hearing on “Examining the Biden Administration’s Energy and Environment Spending Push”

February 26, 2025

I am genuinely shocked that we are having this hearing today. Congress is often accused of being out of touch and out of step with the American people. This hearing is a perfect example of that. At a time when President Trump and Elon Musk are stealing funds approved by Congress for the American people and indiscriminately firing Inspectors General and hundreds of thousands of public servants, Republicans are holding a hearing today examining former President Biden’s energy and environment investments.

They’ve invited the Offices of Inspector General for both the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency. But the seats before us today would traditionally be filled by the Inspectors General of the two agencies. After all, these are the Senate-confirmed officials charged with ferreting out waste, fraud and abuse in these agencies, but they both cannot testify today because they were fired by President Trump at the end of his first week in office.

Trump’s purge of these inspectors general was illegal. The law requires that Congress be notified before an inspector general is terminated and that a justification be provided in writing.

The message from Trump’s firing of these two inspectors general — and many others — is clear. It’s not that he didn’t like the particular people responsible for looking for waste, fraud and abuse, it’s simply that he doesn’t think anyone should be permitted to oversee the federal government while he is President.

And my Republican colleagues apparently agree. Their silence in the face of the termination of so many inspectors general and key federal workforce speaks volumes. Earlier this month, we urged Republicans to hold a hearing on President Trump’s sweeping purge of IGs throughout the federal government but, to date, they’ve refused. And yesterday, Committee Republicans opposed an amendment to the Committee’s oversight plan to ensure the independence of Inspectors General so they can continue to fulfill their legal responsibility to conduct nonpartisan and objective oversight.

All of this Republican inaction demonstrates that Committee Republicans are simply paying lip-service to investigating waste, fraud and abuse. They would rather play politics than actually conduct productive oversight.

In fact, Republicans have wasted two years and held over 20 hearings looking for any excuse to gut investments in American manufacturing and workers. Today’s hearing is

February 26, 2025

Page 2

Republicans' latest attempt to smear programs that help American workers and working families after they failed to find any real evidence of waste, fraud or abuse.

While Republicans are playing politics, Democrats are fighting to protect the historic investments we made through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act. These investments are creating new, good paying jobs, lowering costs for American families, and improving our energy security. They will improve our ability to outcompete China, build our American manufacturing, and reduce our reliance on supply chains controlled by America's adversaries.

This hearing is NOT about oversight or accountability, instead it is another effort by Republicans to justify stealing investments from American communities in order to pay for tax cuts for billionaires and big corporations. They are also pushing ahead with their attempts to strip health care away from millions of Americans by cutting at least \$880 billion from Medicaid.

I firmly believe that this Committee has an obligation to conduct robust oversight of the agencies within our jurisdiction, but with all the fires that Trump and Musk are intentionally starting in these agencies, it's absolutely ridiculous that this is what Republicans are choosing to conduct oversight on today.

They remain complicit with their silence and we will keep calling them out. And with that I yield back the balance of my time.