

Committee on Energy and Commerce

**Opening Statement as Prepared for Delivery
of
Member Paul Tonko**

Markup of 11 Bills, Full Committee

January 21, 2026

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Today the Full Committee will consider seven bills to weaken public health and environmental protections enshrined in the Clean Air Act.

These partisan bills were advanced by the Environment Subcommittee in December.

It is amazing that Democrats and Republicans can reference the same incredible, historic progress that has occurred in the United States to reduce dangerous air pollution since the enactment of the Clean Air Act and come to such dramatically different views on the best course of action.

While Democrats see this past progress as evidence that the law is working and we've been able to reduce pollution while growing the economy, Republicans seem to believe that now is an appropriate time to change course, subjecting our constituents to more environmental harms just so polluters won't need to do as much to comply with health-protective standards.

Americans deserve clean air.

This is especially true today, at a time when millions of Americans are struggling to continue to be able to access affordable health care due to the Republicans' Big Ugly Bill. The bills before us make it more likely that Americans will get sick and need to see a doctor or visit an emergency room.

And while there will be claims that it is imperative that we enact these bills now—to compete with China, or enable A.I., or any number of other reasons of the day—the truth is most of these bills do not represent new and innovative solutions specifically tailored to meet our current challenges.

They are the same policies that have been pushed by polluting industries and considered by this Committee for over a decade. The Clean Air Act has worked, and continues to work, as intended. It has a 50-year track record of protecting Americans' health while enabling economic growth.

The bills we will consider today represent serious threats to both past and future progress, so I must continue to oppose them.

With that, I yield back.