

**Full Committee Hearing to Examine Infrastructure Needs and  
Consider the Legislative Proposal Attached**

**Thursday, June 24, 2021**

**Chairman Manchin's Opening Statement**

- The committee will come to order.
- We're here today to discuss infrastructure investments to address our energy sector, public lands, and western water needs.
- While we'll be focusing our discussion today on our jurisdiction, let me begin by noting that infrastructure, broadly speaking, is truly a bipartisan issue that serves as the backbone of society.
- And it is critical at this time in our history that we come together to invest in our country in ways that are both fiscally responsible and reflect the needs of our nation.
- With the right strategy, reinvesting in our nation's infrastructure can also strengthen the economy, create jobs, boost our competitiveness, and help tackle climate change.
- Although I don't anticipate we will all agree on the size or scope of investment necessary to do this, I think all of my colleagues will agree that the areas within our jurisdiction are an important piece of the broader conversation about our infrastructure needs.
- Let me turn now to the draft legislation before us and the areas in which it invests.
- First off, the bill funds the demonstration and pilot projects included in the bipartisan Energy Act in an all-of-the-above way – with billions of dollars for advanced nuclear, carbon capture and direct air capture, renewables, energy storage, and for industrial emissions solutions.

- You've all heard me say time and time again that we need to address climate change through innovation, not elimination, and that's what this legislation would do.
- That includes going after the low hanging fruit, like energy efficiency, and doing what we can to reduce energy use in our residential, commercial, and industrial buildings. This not only results in real emissions reductions, but it also saves people money.
- This text also builds on and complements the Energy Act by investing in the CO2 infrastructure that will be needed to make CCUS and direct air capture a reality in the way we need it to be.
- It would invest in technologies that have low or no emissions, including supporting our existing zero-emission nuclear fleet and advancing hydrogen technologies that can significantly decarbonize our energy, industrial, and transportation sectors without relying on foreign supply chains.
- It would also build out the supply chains that are needed for clean energy technologies – including making it easier to responsibly mine critical minerals and investing in domestic refining capabilities, in addition to onshoring battery manufacturing and recycling.
- We currently rely on other countries for each piece of that supply chain, some with questionable mining practices, and that's just not right.
- This legislation would also invest heavily in our electric grid to improve the resilience, flexibility, and security of our energy infrastructure.

- We've seen across the country, time and time again, that the grid is not as resilient as we need it to be – from extreme weather events, wildlife, and cyberattacks.
- On the theme of resilience, this legislation would also make substantial targeted investments to restore the health of our forests and mitigate the wildfires that have been impacting many of the communities in our western states.
- It also includes significant investments into legacy clean up efforts to address issues with the abandoned energy infrastructure that powered our country to greatness.
- That includes plugging orphan wells, which not only puts people to work but also curbs methane emissions, which are 84% more potent than CO<sub>2</sub> in the first two decades.
- It also includes investing in the reclamation of abandoned mine lands.
- Our coal communities bear the scars of having mined the coal to power this country to greatness.
- While this funding will do a great deal of good, it will still not be enough to cover all of the outstanding reclamation work that is desperately needed to finish the job and protect the health and safety of these communities in many cases and provide new economic opportunities for these areas.
- So I will be continuing to work with my colleagues to complement this funding with an extension of the AML Reclamation fee that is set to expire in September. Inaction is not an option.
- These are just a few highlights of all the infrastructure investments the bill contemplates.

- This almost \$95 billion investment would deliver on the President's American Jobs Plan in many big ways that can garner bipartisan support.
- I look forward to discussing these proposals and the needs they address with our panel today.
- With that, I turn to my friend and Ranking Member, Senator Barrasso, for his opening remarks.