

LEGISLATIVE HEARING

Thursday, March 1, 2022

Chairman Manchin's Opening Statement

- The committee will come to order.
- Before we turn to the legislation before us today, I want to take a moment to acknowledge Russia's invasion of Ukraine and how Putin has used energy as a weapon to gain leverage over our European allies.
- One thing that hasn't been talked about as much is that during this time of war, the United States is still importing more than half a million barrels per day of crude oil and other petroleum products from Russia, with imports up over 20% in 2021 over 2020.
- It makes no sense at all for us to rely on energy from a country that is actively engaging in acts of war against a freedom seeking democracy – Ukraine – when we are blessed with abundant energy resources right here in America.
- There is no reason why the United States should not be totally energy independent, or at the very least trading with our allies where we need to.
- That is the only way to ensure our energy security.

- It is hypocritical for us ask others to do what we can do – and we can do cleaner – when it comes to producing the energy we and our allies need.
- It's time for the Administration to take strong action to unleash American energy, up to and including banning Russian oil imports at a time when they are attacking our allies.
- Our oil and gas industry partners also need to come to the table and do the right thing for our country and the consumers that rely on their product.
- We are going to continue talking about these issues in the coming days and weeks, because energy security and energy independence must be top of mind for all of us.
- But for today, our hearing will focus on 7 energy bills, 5 of which are bipartisan.
- Our agenda is short today, in large part because we did a lot of good work earlier in this Congress and many of my colleagues' bills were included in whole or in part in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill.
- The bills on the agenda today pertain to advancing the Department of Energy's cutting edge research and development programs and infrastructure as well as relating to managing Department of Energy funds, functions, and authorities.
- I'd like to thank my colleague Senator Barrasso for working with me on two of these bills, the DOE Science for the Future

Act – together with Senators Durbin and Blackburn – and also the Fission for the Future Act.

- The DOE Science for the Future Act reauthorizes the fundamental research and development activities performed by scientists at the Department of Energy, the National Labs, universities, and private companies to advance our understanding of the atom, the cell, the Earth’s systems, and the universe.
- These scientific endeavors involve the most advanced scientific instruments in the world – from the fastest computers to the brightest light sources, and so much more.
- The Office Science is a critical piece of the United States’ ability to advance human knowledge of the sciences, and in carrying out that mission, it advances a critical – and ultimately nonpartisan – aspect of our society.
- We also expanded the ways the DOE’s Established Program to Stimulate Competitive Research – or EPSCoR for short – can support universities in states like West Virginia to boost our competitive research capabilities everywhere and not just in elite schools.
- West Virginia is one of 24 EPSCoR states, most of which are represented on this Committee, where EPSCoR funds have been critical for advancing fundamental university research, including at our own West Virginia University.

- The House included their version of an Office of Science reauthorization in the America COMPETES bill, and we look forward to working out any differences there might be in conference soon so that this China package can get to the President's desk.
- The House bill also included Senator Lujan's bill, which is on the agenda today, to fund deferred maintenance, infrastructure needs, and updates for our National Labs.
- I appreciate Senator Lujan's leadership on the National Labs and his partnership in ensuring they are treated as the crowned jewels that they are of our nation's research and innovation ecosystem.
- I would also like to bring attention to the Fission for the Future Act, which Ranking Member Barrasso and I introduced in December.
- The bill directs the Secretary to work with communities with retiring or retired fossil generation facilities to determine the feasibility of constructing advanced nuclear power plants.
- This bill is an important building block to assist in the economic revitalization of communities providing reliable baseload electricity and opportunities to attract industry to produce advanced materials, hydrogen, and other non-electric applications.

- Less than a month ago, my home state of West Virginia repealed the state ban on nuclear power.
- I strongly supported this move, in part because as the energy transition has begun over the last few decades, and continues to take place, we must be thinking about how to continue providing baseload power.
- Nuclear is an obvious choice, especially with the advanced technologies that hold such promise, and for shuttered coal plant sites that are already connected to the grid, it just makes sense.
- So I look forward discussing this bill today.
- With that, I will turn to Senator Barrasso for his opening remarks.