

## **News : Republican House energy leaders seek 'course correction' in new Congress**

By Maya Weber ,Molly Christian  
Published on - Tue, 31 Jan 2023 16:52:53 EST

- Get advice to provide stronger direction for **FERC**
- Democrats defend 2022 legislative gains

The House Energy and Commerce Committee heard calls to reform the **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission**'s approach to ensuring adequate energy supplies, as Republican leaders set out their agenda for a "course correction" during the panel's first hearing of the 118th Congress Jan. 31.

With a restored House majority, Republicans have set sights on removing barriers to **US** oil and gas production and exports, and scrutinizing the Biden administration's efforts to decarbonize the power sector.

"**We** need to be doing more to secure and unleash **American** energy," said the committee's new chair, Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers, Republican-**Washington**. "'Rush to green' policies have had a devastating effect in **Europe** ... and people are dying due to lack of heat and **electricity**."

And Representative Bill Johnson, Republican-**Ohio**, said the **US** needs a "course correction on our national energy **strategy**" that cuts red tape for **LNG** exports and reduces dependence on **China** for **minerals** and technology.

Among the witnesses supporting a shift, Paul Dabbar, who served as under secretary of energy for science during the Trump administration, recommended the committee take steps to restore "energy dominance," such as requiring agencies to permit, license and approve "all of the above" energy types.

## Reforms of **FERC**, **ISOs**

Dabbar urged "significant legislative reform" of the Federal Power Act and **Natural Gas** Act to make the **Federal Energy Regulatory Commission** perform its "statutory obligation" to ensure there is enough energy supply, arguing the statutes are not "definitive enough."

"They need to radically overhaul [Independent System Operator] rules" to encourage baseload generation, which he argued was being shut down faster than intermittent resources were being built.

"At the end of the day, the **ISOs** under the Federal Power Act, under the authority of **FERC**, are allowing increased vulnerability in the power markets year after year," Dabbar said.

For **natural gas** pipelines and other energy projects, Dabbar also told the panel that extended regulatory approval processes combined with inflation have "exploded" the economic challenges, and he supported time limits for federal reviews.

Concerns over the pace of the clean energy transition was a repeated focus for committee Republicans.

"Where is that limit where **we** have to be at to make sure that these lights come on every day and those plants go on every day with baseload capacity?" asked Representative Bob Latta, Republican-**Ohio**.

Among witness favoring fossil fuel investment, Bob McNally, president of Rapidan Energy Group, cautioned lawmakers to resist "policy mistakes" such as restricting exports as oil markets enter a new "multi-year boom phase."

"As **we** enter a boom cycle and face political risks, it's critical that capital flow back to fossil fuel production, refining and infrastructure," he told the committee. "Policies that delay or impede capital expenditures to fossil energy will only tighten supply/demand balances further and punish consumers with even higher energy prices," he said.

McNally also told lawmakers there was a need for more objective and timely data, suggesting the **US** Energy Information Agency had been "AWOL" in providing honest forecasts about the implications of policies pursued by the Biden administration. He added that the **International Energy Agency** needed to return to providing a business-as-usual reference case scenario to help facilitate cost-benefit assessments of policy scenarios.

## Democrats defend transition

Democrats pushed back on concerns about increased dependence on **renewable** power and new Democratic laws to boost clean energy spending. They said investments in recent climate-focused laws, including the Inflation Reduction Act and bipartisan infrastructure law, will help the **US** better compete against **China** and lead on the global push to carbon-free energy.

"The bottom line is **we** 're going to be left behind if **we** don't move towards **renewables**," said **US** Representative Frank Pallone, Democrat-**New Jersey**, the committee's top Democrat.

Pallone said funding in the Inflation Reduction Act and infrastructure law would enhance grid security and reliably speed the energy transition.

"I reject the premise that fossil fuels are the key to expanding our energy security here in the 21st century," he said.

Representative Diana DeGette, Democrat-**Colorado**, ranking member of the Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security, said she hoped Republicans would not "turn back the clock" on climate progress made in the last Congress and that both parties could work together on climate and energy policy rather than "retreating to our corners."

Since the Inflation Reduction Act's signing in August 2022, nearly \$90 billion in **US** clean energy projects have been announced, said witness Ana Unruh Cohen, who served as majority staff director of the disbanded House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis.

But more needs to be done to tackle the climate challenge, lawmakers and witnesses warned.

Cohen joined Dabbar in calling for reforms to support transmission construction. She also urged policies to increase the energy workforce and aid climate change adaptation and resilience.

"**China** is leading [the] clean energy race, and **we** must catch up," she said.

For internal use only. Not for reproduction or further distribution. Platts' standard terms and conditions apply to all use of this article/excerpt. Read Platts' Terms & Conditions at <https://pmc.platts.com/Public/TermsConditions.aspx>.  
© 2022 by S&P Global Inc. All rights reserved.

Please contact us to learn more about Platts products and services at +1-800-PLATTS-8 / 1-800-752-8878 (Toll-free in U.S. and Canada) or by email at [support@platts.com](mailto:support@platts.com)