

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927  
Minority (202) 225-3641

**Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Hearing on “FERC Perspectives: Questions Concerning EPA’s Proposed Clean Power**  
**Plan and Other Grid Reliability Challenges”**  
**Subcommittee on Energy and Power**  
**July 29, 2014**

I’d like to thank each of the commissioners for being here today. And I especially want to congratulate and welcome Mr. Bay, who has just been confirmed to the Commission.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission plays a key role in maintaining the reliability of the electric grid and protecting electricity consumers. That’s what makes your jobs so important.

The Republican members of this Committee deny the existence of climate change or pretend it doesn’t exist. They see the EPA’s Clean Power Plan for the power sector as a threat to grid reliability. And that’s why they have called this hearing. They hope you will say something that will give them ammunition in their war on the environment.

But those of us who aren’t members of the Flat Earth Society know that carbon emissions from power plants – not EPA regulations – are the real threat to the grid. The facts are sobering.

Last year, the levels of heat-trapping carbon pollution in the atmosphere exceeded 400 parts per million for the first time in millions of years. Last year was the fourth hottest year on record ... seven of the ten hottest years on record occurred in the last decade ... and all ten occurred since 1998.

Wildfires in the West have gotten much worse. Droughts are setting records and devastating harvests. Sea level rise and fierce storms are threatening our coasts. These and many other indicators tell us that global warming is harming us now, and it’s going to get much worse.

The power sector will feel the impacts, as this Committee would know if it had held the hearing the Ranking Member Rush and I requested. Intense storms will disrupt power delivery. Droughts and rising temperatures will force plant shutdowns. Transmission systems will lose capacity at high temperatures. And that’s why the Clean Power Plan is so important for the grid and for our future.

A significant transition is underway in the power sector. Market forces and public policies are driving a shift to renewables, demand-side efficiency, and natural gas-fired generation. We have doubled our capacity to generate renewable electricity from wind and solar in just five years. Wind power is already cost competitive with fossil fuel generation in parts of the country, and the cost of solar power is plummeting. Natural gas costs less than coal, and even coal boosters acknowledge that it is not cost-effective to build new coal plants today.

These changes in the electricity sector are bringing Americans cleaner air, new jobs, lower bills, and more choices. The Clean Power Plan will advance these positive developments.

FERC too should make its own contribution. The statutory standards that FERC administers give the agency many tools to help combat climate change and create the clean energy economy of the future. The U.C. Berkeley Center for Law, Energy, and Environment recently issued a report on this subject, which I ask unanimous consent to insert into the record. I hope all the Commissioners will give these ideas serious consideration.

As this new report shows, we don't have to choose between protecting the environment and reliable electricity.

FERC, grid operators, state public utility commissions, and progressive power companies are already planning for the changes that are underway. Our nation has a proven track record of adapting to new environmental requirements without adverse impacts on reliability.

We don't have to cling to the past and we don't need to be afraid of the future. We can protect our environment, strengthen the grid, and leave our world a better place for our children.