

fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism—this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.

“How far in the discharge of my official duties I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated, the public records and other evidences of my conduct must witness to you and to the world. To myself, the assurance of my own conscience is that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.”

Mr. HILL of Arkansas. “In relation to the still subsisting war in Europe, my proclamation of the 22d of April 1793 is the index to my plan. Sanctioned by your approving voice and by that of your representatives in both houses of Congress, the spirit of that measure has continually governed me, uninfluenced by any attempts to deter or divert me from it.

“After deliberate examination with the aid of the best lights I could obtain, I was well satisfied that our country, under all the circumstances of the case, had a right to take—and was bound in duty and interest, to take—a neutral position. Having taken it, I determined, as far as I should depend upon me, to maintain it with moderation, perseverance, and firmness.

“The considerations which respect the right to hold this conduct it is not necessary on this occasion to detail. I will only observe that, according to my understanding of the matter, that right, so far from being denied by any of the belligerent powers, has been virtually admitted by all.

“The duty of holding a neutral conduct may be inferred, without anything more, from the obligation which justice and humanity impose on every nation, in cases in which it is free to act, to maintain inviolate the relations of peace and amity towards other nations.

“The inducements of interest for observing that conduct will best be referred to your own reflections and experience. With me, a predominant motive has been to endeavor to gain time to our country to settle and mature its yet recent institutions and to progress without interruption to that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.

“Though in reviewing the incidents of my administration I am unconscious of intentional error. I am nevertheless too sensible of my own defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors. Whatever they may be, I fervently beseech the Almighty to avert or mitigate the evils to which they may tend. I shall also carry with me the hope that my country will never cease to view them with indulgence and that, after forty-five years of my life dedicated to its service with an upright zeal, the faults of incompetent abilities will be consigned to oblivion, as myself must soon be to the mansions of rest.

“Relying on its kindness in this as in other things, and actuated by that fervent love towards it which is so natural to a man who views in it the native soil of himself and his progenitors for several generations, I anticipate with pleasing expectation that retreat in which I promise myself to realize without alloy the sweet enjoyment of partaking, in the midst of my fellow citizens, the benign influence of good laws under a free government—the ever favorite object of my heart, and the happy reward, as I trust, of our mutual cares, labors, and dangers.”

□ 1150

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleagues, MIKE KENNEDY of Utah, DON BEYER of Virginia, and BEN CLINE of Virginia, for joining me in this renewal of tradition in this, our semiquincentennial year, of reading George Washington’s Farewell Address.

Indeed, as that Member of the very first Congress from Virginia, American Revolutionary War hero Light-Horse Harry Lee, said at George Washington’s eulogy, he was, in fact, “First in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen.”

I give my thanks also to Speaker JOHNSON and the Republican vice chairman, BLAKE MOORE, for allowing us to use this time on the House floor.

I encourage all of our citizens to participate in America’s 250th birthday in this year of 2026 as we celebrate on July Fourth the signing and publication of our Declaration of Independence from July Fourth, 1776.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

#### WINNERS OF THE GLOBAL ENERGY RACE ARE BEING DECIDED

(Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. CASTEN of Illinois was recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.)

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Illinois?

There was no objection.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, families across America are struggling with ever-increasing energy prices.

In the last year, electricity prices have soared, increasing by 13 percent under the Trump administration. Utility bills overall have increased at double the rate of inflation.

We all know what is driving those increases. We have soaring demand from data centers and other loads, rising prices for natural gas, and much-needed repairs to the grid that have been put off for years.

Those are all tangible, identifiable causes of these price increases, but at

the center of it all is one really simple reason: American energy policy has always put producers first and families second.

Mr. Speaker, you might think that, in a democracy, the fact that there are more consumers than producers would cause the reverse. Yet, in fact, for far too long, we have pursued an energy system with a single goal: Make sure that oil and gas and coal companies keep their profits as high as possible. We have pushed the most expensive, dirtiest forms of energy onto Americans because that is what has helped producers.

The Trump administration has done everything they can to curb the rise of more competitive, renewable energy. You hear a lot about how the Trump administration hates clean energy, but that is not true. They don’t hate clean energy. They hate affordable energy.

Mr. Speaker, there is some good news. We have a plan to fix it, and I am here today because of the Energy Bills Relief Act, a consumer-focused, family-first approach to American energy policy.

Renewable energy is the fastest, lowest-cost, most-affordable way to meet rising demand. Right now, there are bottlenecks in the system that prevent renewable energy from getting from where it is generated to where it can be used.

Our Energy Bills Relief Act removes the red tape. It makes sure that we can build our domestic energy supply so that we keep your beer cold and your showers hot, and lower your bills at the same time.

Mr. Speaker, to do that, we are also going to have to modernize our electric grid and increase capacity by providing much-needed, overdue upgrades using the latest technology.

We are starting to fall behind other countries, which means that those costs could rise even further if we don’t act, but we have time. We have time to catch up, and the Energy Bills Relief Act helps us to do it.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. LEVIN), my good friend and partner in good trouble on this bill.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Illinois for yielding. It is an honor to work with the gentleman on this bill and other things.

Mr. Speaker, last night in this very Chamber, the President declared that America is in a golden age. He said that energy prices were plummeting. He said that we are winning so much that we don’t know what to do about so much winning.

He celebrated record fossil fuel production and assured the American people that drilling alone is delivering affordability. He dismissed clean energy as a scam and suggested that the path forward is simply to double down on the past.

I agree that every one of us should want America to be strong, prosperous, and secure. Yet, the real test of any energy policy is not what sounds good in

a televised address. It is whether working families feel relief when they open their utility statements. It is whether small businesses can forecast stable costs. It is whether seniors on fixed incomes are insulated from volatility rather than being exposed to it.

Families don't experience energy affordability through slogans. They experience it through monthly statements. Electricity costs are up 13 percent, and residential gas prices are up nearly 60 percent across the country.

One in six households is now behind on their electric or gas bills. Families are paying more to heat and cool their homes, more to keep the lights on, and more just to get through the month. For millions of Americans already stretched thin, this is yet another bill that they can't afford.

This comes despite the President promising on the campaign trail to cut energy bills by 50 percent. It is not just a broken promise on costs. It is a strategic failure at a defining moment for America's economic future.

We are living through the most important global energy transition since the industrial revolution. The countries that deploy clean energy the fastest are lowering costs, strengthening domestic manufacturing, and securing control over the energy supply chains that will define economic power for decades.

This is the moment when the winners of the global energy race are being decided, but instead of leading, the United States is being pulled backward.

Over the past year, more than 165,000 clean energy jobs have been wiped out or delayed. Projects capable of powering roughly 13 million homes have been canceled or frozen. Clean energy tax credits are under attack. Grants have been rescinded. Permitting for wind and solar has been effectively paused. Billions of dollars in private investment are sitting idle because Federal policy has injected uncertainty into the marketplace.

At the same time, the administration is doubling down on fossil fuel policies that leave families exposed to volatile global markets and rising prices.

Mr. Speaker, let's be honest about what is happening. Families are paying more because this administration is choking off the supply of clean, low-cost electricity while forcing ratepayers to subsidize aging, expensive fossil fuel plants.

It is not ideology. It is math. It is math. If we are serious about affordability—truly serious—we must ask a different question. It is not how much we can drill, but rather how we build an energy system that delivers stable, low-cost power for decades?

The truth—and it is a truth grounded in financial analysis, not political branding—is that clean energy is the lowest cost new electricity in the United States. Wind and solar, on an unsubsidized basis, undercut new coal and frequently undercut new natural

gas generation. Utilities choose clean not because of ideology but because they are the least expensive options available to meet demand.

That isn't to say that I disagreed with everything that the President had to say last night. In fact, I was genuinely pleased that he acknowledged the pressure that data centers are placing on our electric grid. The explosion of artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and advanced manufacturing is real, and it is transforming our economy. It is driving electricity demand upward at a pace that we haven't seen in decades. Ignoring that reality would be irresponsible, and confronting it is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, the President suggested that tech companies should build their own power plants so that household rates don't rise. At its core, I think that intention is correct. Ratepayers should not be forced to subsidize infrastructure built to serve trillion-dollar tech companies.

Families living on fixed incomes shouldn't be forced to underwrite private server farms for Big Tech. Small businesses shouldn't be absorbing the transmission costs created by hyperscale expansion, and protecting consumers must be the starting principle.

Yet, the correct intentions of the President aren't enough. We need statutory guardrails so that utilities can socialize grid upgrade costs across all customers. Without clear cost allocation rules, transmission investments triggered by large new loads can be spread broadly rather than assigned to the source of the demand.

Without modernized planning, the infrastructure required for rapid load growth can crowd out other investments and create bottlenecks that ultimately drive rates higher for everyone.

□ 1200

There is a second layer to this. Even if data centers build dedicated generation, the broader grid still absorbs the consequences of rising demand. If demand rises and the cheapest new resources are constrained, prices rise for everybody. If transmission is insufficient, congestion increases and wholesale prices spike for everybody. If fossil fuel generation continues to dominate, the corresponding volatility is transmitted directly into higher retail electric bills for everybody.

In sum, if we restrict the cheapest sources of electricity while demand rises, prices are going to go up. It is not ideological. It is just supply and demand. If we slow the deployment of the lowest-cost wind and solar, if we delay transmission build-out, if we limit storage, then the system will rely more heavily on higher-cost generation, and consumers are going to pay the difference.

If, on the other hand, we modernize the grid, we deploy the lowest-cost resources at scale—if we accelerate transmission expansion, integrate stor-

age, and allow clean energy to compete fairly and fully—then rising demand can be met with falling costs and less volatility. Infrastructure will be built more intelligently, enhancing reliability rather than undermining reliability.

Again, this is not ideology. It is math. It is common sense.

Today, along with my friend from Illinois (Mr. CASTEN), with whom I am so proud to work, we are embarking on really a new path forward, the Energy Bills Relief Act.

This is all about math, and it is all about common sense. It is all about how electricity markets actually function. It is all about the need for grid modernization as an economic imperative. It is all about fairness in who pays the bill for the modernized electric grid. It is all about protecting ratepayers with enforceable policy rather than with empty statements.

The American people deserve more than rhetoric. They deserve a system built on data and durability. They deserve leadership that understands that affordability is engineered, not declared.

They deserve lower bills. The path to lower bills runs directly through the clean energy deployment that markets are already telling us is the cheapest way forward. That is why we are here today, and that is what the Energy Bills Relief Act is designed to deliver.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Congressman LEVIN.

I am going to take a little bit of a personal privilege here and tell you a little bit about MIKE's and my background.

MIKE and I both came into Congress in 2018. Prior to that, we were both in the clean energy industry. I think it is safe to say that prior to the election of Donald Trump in 2016, neither of us thought that our paths involved eventually getting to Congress or certainly being in this moment here right now.

I say that because both of us spent our careers, before getting into Congress, building and deploying clean energy, building and deploying low-cost, affordable energy. If you are going to go and build one of those plants, you build the plant, you hook it up, you connect it to the grid. The person who now is controlling the dispatch of that plant never runs it unless it is cheaper than the electric grid. Every minute you own a solar panel, every minute you own a cogeneration plant, a wind turbine, all of these technologies that are out there, you are saying: Is this cheaper or more expensive than the alternative?

There is a saying back in the days when I was going and doing all of that, that asking a utility for permission to interconnect to the grid is like asking a man for permission to date his wife. It doesn't matter whether you are cheaper. It doesn't matter whether that is in the national interest. You are a competitive threat, and capitalism works on competition.

So fast-forward. MIKE and I run for Congress. We win. Speaker PELOSI appoints us both to the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the Subcommittee on Energy, Climate, and Grid Security and charges us, along with our wonderful leader (Ms. CASTOR), to figure out how to take this knowledge and make sure that we can deploy cheaper, cleaner energy. That work through the 116th Congress, through the 117th Congress ultimately led to the Inflation Reduction Act.

In 2022, we passed the largest climate bill in the history of this country, in the history of the world. The purpose of that bill was to make sure that your access to cheap energy was not a function of whether you had capital, whether you could hire the lawyers and the engineers to go and fight with the utility. It was to make sure that every American had access to the cheapest energy.

That bill, the Inflation Reduction Act, took a significant step forward in expanding access to cleaner, more affordable energy sources to lower costs for all Americans. I was really proud of the work we did to help write that bill. Then President Trump killed it.

Now, killing it didn't prevent all of those generators that got built from operating, because if you have got a solar panel on your roof, it is still cheaper than whatever anybody else is providing. It blocks new people's ability to bring those forward.

Last summer, he gutted programs that were designed to boost domestic renewable energy. He slashed incentives to help households save money. He arbitrarily blocked the development of affordable energy sources, while forcing more expensive coal plants to keep running, ensuring that the fossil fuel companies can keep raking in profits at taxpayers' expense.

The Energy Bills Relief Act puts an end to that. This is a consumer-focused bill. It is a bill that puts American families first. It restores the tax credits for home energy upgrades that were ended by President Trump. It incentivizes utilities to help consumers save money by funding home weatherization and energy efficiency. Wouldn't you like to spend less on your natural gas bill? Wouldn't you like your utility to be a partner in that?

It provides financial assistance to make sure that families don't have their power shut off. It puts an end to price gouging because utilities shouldn't profit while you are struggling.

It makes sure that places like data centers cover their own costs, and if a data center opens in your area, that doesn't mean that the costs are pushed onto your household. It gives a voice to the American people and makes sure they are consulted when new energy projects are being developed in their community.

This bill was put together in a way that I wish was not so innovative. A lot of bills around here must start by say-

ing what is politically possible. What can we do on a bipartisan basis? Well, if what is scientifically necessary exceeds what is politically possible, then we are failing in any ability to claim to be a leader.

What we did in this bill is, it says: What is the energy policy that is necessary? What is the energy policy that is most helpful to American consumers? That is what we set out to do. I am proud of the legislation that Congressman LEVIN and I have written to do that.

With that, I yield back to the great gentleman from California (Mr. LEVIN).

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend from Illinois for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to just spell out some basic facts and some myths about clean energy because there is a whole lot of misinformation out there these days.

The first thing I will say is that clean energy is the lowest-cost new electricity in America. Independent financial analysis confirms that utility-scale solar and onshore wind are the cheapest forms of new electricity generation available in the United States. This is from Lazard, their Levelized Cost of Energy analysis, showing that unsubsidized solar and wind consistently undercut new coal and new natural gas generation.

There was recently a report that solar projects are on average 41 percent cheaper than the lowest cost fossil fuel alternatives globally, and onshore wind projects are 53 percent cheaper. Another analysis shows that solar is approximately \$64 per megawatt-hour cheaper than coal and \$20 cheaper than combined-cycle gas. Wind is \$61 cheaper than coal and \$17 cheaper than gas.

Markets are already choosing clean energy because it is the least expensive option. In fact, States leading in renewable generation generally see lower electricity prices. According to EIA data, 17 of 22 States with above-average shares of wind and solar had below-average electricity prices last year. Thirteen of those States voted Republican in 2024, I might add. Another analysis showed that the 4 States with the highest renewable generation saw prices fall in 2025. While 9 of the 10 States with the lowest renewable energy penetration saw prices rise.

This isn't that hard. The cheapest, most affordable energy is the cleanest energy. Yet, instead of expanding that supply, the administration chooses to restrict it.

The second thing I want to talk about is coal and market distortion. At the same time that clean energy deployment is being obstructed, this Department of Energy has issued emergency orders forcing aging coal plants to remain online.

□ 1210

In Colorado, for example, that decision is estimated to cost ratepayers \$20 million over 90 days, roughly \$85 million annually, and potentially up to

\$150 million per year if required to operate continuously.

In Michigan, ratepayers paid approximately \$80 million over 4 months to keep a coal plant running. If coal were the lowest cost option, it would not need these sorts of emergency orders.

Ninety-nine percent of U.S. coal plants are more expensive to operate than replacing them with new wind or solar, according to Energy Innovation. Coal is aging, it is unreliable, it is costly, and more than half the fleet is already scheduled to retire. NERC reliability data shows increasing forced outage rates for coal plants in recent years.

This is not free market competition. This is protectionism for expensive incumbents while families are footing the bill.

The third thing I would like to talk about is reliability. Opponents sometimes argue that wind and solar are unreliable. The evidence says exactly the opposite.

Battery storage deployment is absolutely taking off. The U.S. is projected to add more than 18 gigawatts of new utility-scale battery storage. Just last year, 2025, there was a huge record number. Nearly 11 gigawatts were added in 2024. By the end of 2026, the assumptions are, there will be nearly 65 gigawatts of total storage capacity.

The majority of new solar projects in the western interconnection area now include co-located storage. Battery costs have dropped drastically in the last couple of years.

Transmission expansion connects regions experiencing different weather patterns, improving reliability and lowering costs for everyone, delivering the grid of the future, delivering the interconnected, flexible, diversified grid of the future.

Meanwhile, what is the alternative? Well, during Winter Storm Fern in January of 2026, coal plants ramped up as expected, but fuel prices spiked, stockpiles dropped to their lowest levels in years, and the system was strained.

We know that gas infrastructure can freeze. We know that peaker plants can be overstressed. We know that fossil fuels are not immune from failure.

Reliability comes from diversification and modernization, not by clinging to a single fuel.

Next, I hear that clean energy can't meet growing demand. That is not true either. Electricity consumption hit a record high last year, and it is projected to continue rising in 2026, according to EIA. AI-driven data centers, I think we all know, are a major contributor, with electricity demand from data centers expected to double by 2030.

Clean energy is the fastest resource to deploy. Not only is it cheapest, but it is fastest to deploy. The average solar project can be built in 15 to 17 months. A natural gas plant often takes 4 years or longer. Gas turbine shortages mean new turbines may not be available until the 2030s.

Solar and wind growth outpaced global demand growth in the first half of 2025, with solar alone meeting 83 percent of global electricity demand growth in the first half of 2025.

If we are serious about meeting rising demand and doing so affordably, we must accelerate the most affordable and fastest-to-deploy resources, which also happen to be the cleanest resources.

Next, I want to talk about data centers and fairness.

Data centers are expanding dramatically, and utilities are investing billions of dollars in transmission upgrades.

For example, in PJM, \$4.3 billion in transmission costs associated with data center growth were passed to ratepayers. An additional \$7.3 billion in increased generation costs were recorded.

Without guardrails, households and small businesses are subsidizing infrastructure where trillion-dollar companies are making the money.

That is why I am proud that our Energy Bills Relief Act includes protections for consumers to ensure that data centers pay for their own grid updates. It incentivizes clean, zero-emission electricity use to reduce overall system costs and pollution.

We need to make sure that as growth continues, that ratepayers are not stuck with the bill while trillion-dollar corporations reap all the benefit.

Now, I will turn close to my home for just a second and talk about wildfires and, in particular, California.

California's electricity rates have gone up since the mid-2000s. No question about that. That is despite the fact that we have led in energy efficiency.

Wildfire mitigation and grid hardening are now 16 percent of total utility costs, 16 percent. Ratepayers in California have borne more than \$27 billion in wildfire-related costs just between 2019 and 2024.

Investor-owned utilities have passed on bankruptcy settlements and infrastructure upgrades tied to wildfire liability, and they have stuck it to the ratepayer.

That is why blaming renewable energy for rate increases doesn't tell the picture. They are wildfire driven. These are simply misrepresented facts by those who have a grudge against renewable energy.

The Energy Bills Relief Act includes a grant program to support grid upgrades that would reduce wildfire risks, that would prevent catastrophic utility failures, lowering long-term ratepayer burdens.

Next, I want to talk about LNG exports and volatility.

As LNG exports increase, domestic natural gas prices increasingly reflect international demand. Global volatility becomes domestic volatility.

Wind and solar, on the other hand, have no fuel price. They have no geopolitical premium. They have no shipping constraints. When you build re-

newable generation, the fuel is free forever. The fuel is free forever. That is a big deal. That is long-term price stability.

What would our bill do? I am very proud of a lot of the things that it would accomplish.

Number one: It would rescind the tax hike on low-cost, clean energy, and it would restore tax credits for clean energy such as those in the Inflation Reduction Act.

Number two: It would reverse roadblocks to clean energy permitting and restrict the abuse of Department of Energy emergency orders.

Number three: It would ensure that data centers pay their fair share.

Number four: It would expand LIHEAP and weatherization assistance to help struggling families.

Number five: It would protect natural gas markets from international volatility.

Number six: It would build a nationally interconnected grid to improve affordability, reliability, and resilience.

Most importantly and lastly: It would share the economic benefits of clean energy with host communities.

It is a good bill. It is one that we worked on for a long time, and we are going to get as much support as we can.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SUBRAMANYAM).

Mr. SUBRAMANYAM. Mr. Speaker, I thank everyone here today for all their hard work and leadership.

One of the things that the President said last night is he is doing so much to lower energy costs through drill, baby, drill and through all of the other actions he has taken.

I think on the campaign he said he was going to lower energy prices by 50 percent. Yet, last year, Americans paid more than 13 percent for their electricity bills compared to the previous year. The big reason is that the big, ugly bill added about \$250 billion to Americans' energy bills by picking energy favorites and slowing down new technology, so energy prices continue to rise for Americans.

Something the President said is that the data centers will help lower Americans' energy costs. One of the assumptions there is that they will pay for their own energy infrastructure and essentially not shift that burden to Virginians and Americans.

In Virginia, we are facing an additional 9 percent increase in energy costs this year, and data centers are a big part of that. They consume about 25 percent of the energy and could be more soon. It could be up to 40 percent. Last year, more than \$4.3 billion in transmission infrastructure costs for data centers were passed on to ratepayers.

With this pledge, basically the President is asking for technology companies building data centers to pledge to build their own energy infrastructure along with their data centers moving

forward and not shift the costs to ratepayers.

I welcome the idea of making sure that ratepayers aren't shouldering the burden of energy infrastructure and energy generation because the American people deserve better than that.

One of the things I would like to see more of is rather than a pledge, a concrete proposal, actual regulatory framework that will protect people's energy costs.

That is what we are doing in Virginia. Down in Richmond, there is now legislation that they are moving forward to essentially make sure that ratepayers aren't paying for the energy generation of data centers.

□ 1220

I look forward to having this bipartisan conversation, but I know that if the President doesn't come up with the framework that we need, then it is going to be another promise made, promise not kept when it comes to energy prices.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR).

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank Congressman CASTEN for his great leadership and also Congressman MIKE LEVIN for drawing us together here today.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today, as I do every day, on behalf of the people of the region I represent, but also for people across our country. Americans are facing the high cost of energy, and it is becoming unaffordable, but it is not their fault.

At the same time, many Federal incentives to help lower energy costs and to create the new energy systems for the future have been rolled back by the current administration. Actually, I am somewhat surprised that that happened.

America's grid is old. I hope President Trump hears this. It is under greater strain. Our country actually set new records twice this past July for peak electricity demand. It is getting hotter in many parts of the country during the summer months, and for those of us who live up north, let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, it is getting colder. The old grid system is being tested like never before by hotter weather and cooler weather, cold weather, and frigid weather, and higher usage. When the grid strains, costs rise.

Every household, I would venture, in our country, is feeling the pinch. For us in the upper Midwest, it isn't a 9 percent increase. Our energy bills have doubled. In Ohio, rapid demand growth from Big Tech data centers are also pushing up energy costs before the public, the people who live in these areas, can even catch the wind that they can actually try to figure out and have meetings and say: Hey, wait a minute, what can we do about this?

That is because their prices are doubling across our State and region.

Families notice the increase. One constituent even told me that her family's bill increased from \$230 a month to \$494 in July. That is a huge increase. This increased cost spiral in energy is simply not sustainable.

The majority party and the Department of Energy, meanwhile, under the current administration, are rolling back energy investments in America's future to help lower costs. I represent the most important domestic solar manufacturer, First Solar. I don't take money from them, and I don't own their stock. What they have done for America, 10 percent of our energy production in this country is now renewable and energy savings.

We are smarter. We are smarter than we were 50 years ago. Our Nation must invest faster in modern infrastructure with an all-of-the-above energy strategy to truly become energy independent in perpetuity.

I see many younger people in the gallery. For those of them who are a little bit techie and they care about the future of our country, they can help us become energy independent within our own shores and do so in a way that doesn't damage the environment.

Just this last year, there were 354 clean energy projects or companies that the new administration canceled—new projects—delaying new investments. We have seen layoffs of workers across the country because these projects lost Federal funding.

In my district, one of the lodestar companies that I represent is called Libbey Glass. Toledo, Ohio, is the glass center of the world. The administration took away over \$40 million that was going to help them. This is legislation Congress passed, and the administration signed the bill. It was vetted by the agencies and so forth. It helped them save energy so that they could compete with glass against China, France, and Mexico, where workers are paid less and product is dumped on the global markets.

When we don't invest in companies and the jobs they create for the American people, then we shoot ourselves in the foot. There is no question that over 173,000 clean energy jobs actually have been eliminated between President Trump's election and swearing-in and February of this year.

Think about that, Mr. Speaker. That was building the future for our country. The ten top States that have lost the most jobs from this misguided assault on clean energy are the following: Texas, Massachusetts, Arizona, New Jersey, Michigan, New York, South Carolina, Illinois, North Carolina, and my home State of Ohio. It is interesting to me that three of the Members who are on the floor now are from Illinois, Mr. CASTEN; Mr. LEVIN from California; and myself from Ohio. We understand what these budget cuts mean. While at the national level, the rise in energy rates is affecting people in every single State in our Union.

For my own district, the prices have doubled. Every family in the country

knows what is happening. It is time for the executive branch to wake up. Meanwhile, China isn't asleep. It is investing in record levels in terms of energy development making its products more competitive worldwide.

President Trump said that he was going to fix this, and he has done completely the opposite. He did hint last night about something dealing with new energy investments and these AI terminals in centers that are being built across the country. I hope he follows through.

The American people certainly deserve better, and we need to stand up for affordability, not abdication. That sends our country backward.

I thank, Mr. Speaker, Congressman CASTEN and Congressman LEVIN and others who have spoken today this afternoon in order to stand up for the American people and help them manage their budgets, and energy is such a central account in every single family's budget.

I thank the gentleman for his leadership on this and for giving us a roadmap to lower America's energy bills.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I yield, again, to gentleman from California (Mr. LEVIN).

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly thank my good friend from Ohio, MARCY KAPTUR, from whom I have learned so much on the Appropriations Committee and otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, this debate should not be partisan, and it does not have to be partisan. The physical laws of energy do not care who is in the majority. The economics of electricity do not change with the party label or which district you are from, Mr. Speaker. The grid does not ask whether the power flowing through it came from a red State or a blue State.

We really need to answer only one question: Is there power when it is needed at a price families can afford?

That is why this ought to unite us. Republican and Democratic States alike lead wind and solar generation. Red and blue districts alike host clean manufacturing. Farmers earn steady lease payments from solar panels and wind turbines that help keep their family farms afloat through droughts, floods, and commodity swings. Veterans and skilled tradespeople are building the advanced technologies that strengthen our energy security and reduce our dependence on volatile fuel markets. This is an American project, happening in every region across every map.

The choice before us is simple: Do we want to play politics with the energy system that powers our economy, or do we want to win the future?

That is because the truth is that families do not experience energy policy as ideology. They experience it as a bill. They experience it as a choice between paying the utility bill and paying for groceries. They experience it as

small business owners deciding whether to hire or to cut hours. They experience it as seniors on a fixed income turning down the thermostat and hoping the next heat wave doesn't last too long. That is what energy affordability means in real life.

Right now, energy bills are higher. Too many jobs have been put at risk or pushed offshore. Too many families have been stretched thinner. Too many communities are being asked to subsidize decisions that protect the incumbent energy players instead of protecting consumers.

We can keep doing what we have been doing: restricting the cheapest new supply, forcing ratepayers to carry the cost of uneconomic fossil fuel plants, and letting the infrastructure needs of trillion-dollar tech companies get passed down to households.

We can keep pretending that the answer to every 21st-century challenge is the same 20th-century playbook. We can cling to the past and see the costs rise across the country for the average person, or we can do what responsible leaders do. We can modernize and we can compete.

We can build the grid that matches the economy that we actually have, not the economy that we used to have. We can expand transmission so that power can move to where it is needed. We can deploy storage so reliability is stronger in heat and cold and storms. We can make cost allocation fair so households aren't paying for private infrastructure that should be borne by the companies that profit from it.

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We can strengthen resilience against wildfires and extreme weather so ratepayers are not trapped in a cycle of catastrophic costs. We can do what markets are already trying to do: scale the lowest cost electricity available.

Here is what cannot be debated away with partisan politics: Clean energy is the lowest cost new energy in America. Clean energy is the fastest path to stabilizing energy bills. Clean energy is how we meet rising demand without squeezing households. Clean energy is how we compete with China, rather than handing them the supply chain of the future. Clean energy is how we reduce volatility, because sunshine and wind do not spike in price when global markets panic.

That is why the question is not whether clean energy wins. It is already winning in every market that allows fair competition to function. The question is whether America leads.

Will we lead in building the industries that power the next generation of manufacturing? Will we lead in the technologies that make the grid more reliable, not less reliable? Will we lead in protecting consumers rather than protecting entrenched interests? Will we lead in an energy system that is affordable, resilient, and secure?

History is not going to remember who had the better slogan. History, I

think, will remember in this moment whether this body decided to make America more competitive or more brittle. It will remember whether we chose the future when the future was still a choice.

That is what the Energy Bills Relief Act is designed to do. It is about families first. It is about consumers. It is about fair markets. It is about building. It is about winning.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we don't argue too much about yesterday, and I hope we focus instead on building tomorrow.

Mr. CASTEN. Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. LEVIN for his remarks.

As we prepare to close, I want to talk a little bit about how the Energy Bills Relief Act fits into the broader conversation we are having about energy permitting right now.

To do this, I want to ask you to consider that you saw someone on TV who said the reason we don't have a lot of houses in America is because of the permitting barriers to building houses out of straw. You would probably have two thoughts. The first is, who the heck wants to build a house out of straw? The second thought you might have is what little pig is behind this advocacy campaign.

I tell you that because you have to look at what is happening in the energy sector right now, among those in the fossil fuel industry who are telling you that the permitting problem we have is a difficulty deploying fossil fuel assets.

Let's look at some numbers. In the year 2010, the United States consumed 1.1 billion short tons per year of coal. Today, we consume about 500 million. That is a more than 50 percent drop in the amount of coal our country is consuming.

In the year 2000, the United States consumed about 20 million barrels of oil per day. Today, we consume about 20 million barrels of oil per day.

We drive more miles and have more people, yet we are consuming the same amount of oil. Our houses are just as well-lit, just as warm, yet we are consuming half as much coal.

How did we get to that point? The reason we got to that point is because vehicles got more efficient. Given the choice between driving a car that costs you \$40 to fill up and one that costs \$20, people prefer \$20. If the choice is \$100 versus \$50, people prefer \$50. Heck, if you have an electric vehicle, you don't have to pay at all, especially if you have a solar panel on your roof. People like not paying for energy.

The other way that that happened is that the fastest growing source of new energy in this country has been renewable energy. We now generate more power from non-hydro renewables than we do from all the coal plants in the country.

That is not because we got woke. It is because we got greedy. It is because markets said they want to build the cheap stuff, and consumers wanted to benefit from that cheap stuff.

Now, step back and say, okay, what do you do if you are a fossil fuel company that is selling something that is losing market share? There is a new technology coming out that is eating into your customer base. You can't sell as much.

They have done two things. Number one, they have shifted to exports. In 2016, the United States basically didn't export any natural gas at all. By 2021, we were exporting 300,000 million cubic feet per year. Today, we are over 500,000 million cubic feet per year. It is as if we invented cell phones and then decided to double down on exporting rotary phone technology to the rest of the world. We are still producing a lot of oil in the United States, but oil is increasingly also an export play.

If there is a permitting problem that is blocking our ability to produce and distribute oil and gas, how is it that it is so easy to get it down to the Gulf Coast and ship it out to overseas? The truth is, it ain't that hard.

The reason why we are having this conversation about permitting is really, really simple. Half of the businesses in this country, by definition, are below average. A competitive market does not reward below-average businesses. Now, we find ourselves in a position where energy industry participants that historically made sure that we kept our lights on, made sure that our cars could drive, and made sure that our homes were warm built the economy that we have, and we are grateful to them. They are now losing market share, and instead of pivoting to providing people with the technologies they want, they are, number one, shifting to exports to try to go places that are not blessed with the kind of competitive capitalistic markets that we have in the United States; and, number two, they are doing everything they can to ask people in this body to please prevent capitalism from eating my lunch because I cannot compete in a competitive market. That is what is going on.

The reason why we are spending this time talking so much about costs and energy is because we have this amazing opportunity right now that we can have our cake and eat it, too.

When we embrace clean energy, we are embracing affordable energy. When we embrace consumers, we are embracing competition. To turn against those is to turn against capitalism. It is to turn against everything that ever truly made America great. It is to turn against the things that have kept up.

Then you ask how much farther we could go. I will give you some crazy statistics. The United States' total GDP divided by the total amount of energy that the United States uses, we generate about \$200 of GDP per million Btu of primary energy.

The United Kingdom generates almost 350 million Btu, almost twice as much as we generate. The Danes generate over 500. Their economies are vastly more efficient at turning energy

into wealth than the United States is—vastly more, like twice as efficient.

Imagine if we were so bad at turning labor into wealth as our competitors. We would be having a crisis about why American labor is so uncompetitive. Imagine if you were running a business that did a terrible job at turning capital into wealth, and we were earning terrible returns on investment in the United States economy. We would be having a crisis.

We should be having a crisis about the fact that we have done such a horrible job at turning energy into economic activity. We can be depressed about that, or we can be enormously optimistic at the opportunity we have in front of us.

We don't have a lot of time to prevent massive ecological disaster from climate change, but we do have a way to move forward to avert that crisis and make us stupidly rich. My God, let's move forward.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing us the time. I thank Congressman LEVIN, Congresswoman KAPTUR, and Congressman SUBRAMANYAM. For goodness' sake, let's move forward. I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARIDOPOLOS). The Chair reminds Members not to refer to persons in the gallery.

ADJOURNMENT FROM WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2026, TO THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2026; ADJOURNMENT FROM THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2026, TO MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2026; AND ADJOURNMENT FROM MONDAY, MARCH 2, 2026, TO TUESDAY, MARCH 3, 2026

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet at 9:30 a.m. tomorrow; that when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at 9 a.m. on Monday, March 2, 2026; and when the House adjourns on that day, it adjourn to meet at noon on Tuesday, March 3, 2026, for morning-hour debate and 2 p.m. for legislative business.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

#### PRICES IN CALIFORNIA ARE TOO HIGH

(Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2025, Mr. KILEY of California was recognized for 30 minutes.)

Mr. KILEY of California. Mr. Speaker, over the last month, gas prices in California have risen by about 40 cents. This is very different from what is going on elsewhere in the country.

In fact, right now, gas prices in California average \$4.63 where the national average is \$2.97. California's gas prices are by far the highest in the country.