COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

Energy Subcommittee Ranking Member Randy Weber Speaks to the U.S. House of Representatives in Opposition to Democrat Amendment to H.R. 4447

September 24th, 2020

I thank Ranking Member Walden/Shimkus for yielding me time to speak on this amendment. I rise in opposition to this amendment for a number of reasons.

We've heard the same sensible logic from our side of the aisle countless times over the past 24 hours as we've debated this bill and its amendments: the package is overfunded, incorrectly prioritized, and a partisan process nightmare. So, in a way, it's fitting that this is the only standalone amendment we'll consider today – it's one that is seeking even more funding for one of this bill's most misguided priorities.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce said it best when they penned that this bill needed to avoid "contentious and extraneous issues," to be supported. Let me tell you, the Democrats unyielding focus on massive increases to applied energy and in particular for DOE's well-funded Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy is the most contentious issue in here.

By now I'm sure you can all say it along with me, but I cannot stress it enough: it is basic research, not applied energy that will put us in the best global position to develop the long-term clean energy solutions to address our changing climate and lay the foundation for our clean and affordable energy future.

The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy has grown considerable starting with what was supposed to be a temporary recovery in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Today it is funded at $2.8 billion, which is more than DOE's research in fossil energy, nuclear energy, electricity, and cybersecurity combined. And let me just say there is no clean energy future without nuclear energy.

H.R. 4447 – just the base text – would spend more than $3.7 billion dollars on EERE programs. This amendment, which seeks to increase authorizations by an additional 50%, can only be labeled as irresponsible. This is a contentious and extraneous issue. The country doesn't have an unlimited Federal research funds. It's difficult, but we must

set priorities and invest strategically – this is our job. This amendment does the opposite.

As Energy Subcommittee Ranking Member of the House Science Committee, I support an all the above energy strategy and that includes renewable energy. But supporting an all of the above energy strategy does not mean increasing Federal investment for every R&D program in perpetuity.

I'd like to ask my friends on the other side of the aisle - when do we let the mature technologies of wind and solar stand up on their own in the market without continued funding to "reduce market barriers"? When do we open our eyes and realize that the solar industry has an average annual growth rate of 49% and wind power has tripled over the best decade? These industries don't need our support for deployment, they are already in the market and growing.

This kind of duplicative and short-sighted strategy may result in politically expedient talking points, but will not pay off in the long run. Instead, I propose investment in basic research of advanced computing, machine learning and advanced manufacturing, and the development of new materials. Areas like this will benefit not just renewables, but all forms of energy technologies. If possible, shouldn't we bring our tried and proven methods with us to the clean energy future?

Simply put: we cannot abandon the energy infrastructure we have in place unless we also want to accept rolling blackouts and intermittent electricity as part of our daily lives.

This amendment would double down on the misguided investments in this misguided legislative initiative. I urge my colleagues to vote no on this amendment and I yield back the balance of my time.