

House Subcommittee discusses U.S. energy security

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The House Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Energy and Power held a hearing this September to discuss the Department of Energy's (DOE) role in national, economic, and energy security. Although Secretary of Energy Ernie Moniz provided testimony on topics covered in the Obama Administration's first Quadrennial Energy Review, including energy transmission, storage and distribution infrastructure, much of the conversation focused on the struggles currently facing coal-dependent communities.

During the hearing, Sec. Moniz and Congressman David McKinley (R-WV) discussed the costs and benefits of carbon capture and storage (CCS) versus less expensive high-efficiency coal-fired power plants. Sec. Moniz reiterated DOE's commitment to CCS, and emphasized that CCS can be employed for energy types other than coal, including natural gas, and other industrial applications. Rep. McKinley expressed his desire to continue using coal as part of an all-of-the-above energy strategy, and Members of the Subcommittee also voiced general concern over the economic downturn recently experienced in coal-dependent communities.

The rise of renewable energy technology was also discussed during the hearing. Sec. Moniz argued that renewable energy could contribute to national security since, "There's no issue of importing or exporting the fuels." He also argued that the growth of the renewable energy sector could help counter to job losses within the coal industry. Sec. Moniz suggested that the U.S. take advantage of the rise in renewables as an opportunity for significant economic growth.

Sources: Department of Energy, House Energy and Commerce Committee
