

Congressman Tim Murphy
Opening Statement – Committee on Energy and Commerce
Climate Change Hearing
Tuesday, April 21, 2009

I remember as a young boy, one day, hearing my parents talk about this thing called Sputnik that was launched into space and they were worried as were many Americans that somehow the Russians were beating us at something.

What we thought was a backwoods sort of country, the Soviet Union, we thought they really didn't have much science at all.

But, it did spark a major change in America, in our schools it emphasized science in our universities, they really began to look more beyond just our streets and look upward to our skies.

And then came this astounding challenge by the President of the United States saying that within 10 years we will put a man on the moon safely and bring him home and indeed we did that.

Over a 10 year time span our nation came together to meet the challenge of its generation.

Well now we have a new challenge for our generation and that challenge is energy.

Now I am not a climatologist or a physicist and I am not here to argue about any of the things people do discuss with regard to climate change and its causes and what that might come to be.

But, I have a background in health and I am concerned that were we should find common ground is that we do want a clean planet with clean air, and clean water, and clean soil and we can get there if we all pull together with the common goal.

The question is "How?" And the answer is can we do this in a way that boosts our economy and not hurts it, that creates jobs in America and not sends them overseas, and really and truly works in a way that American families find opportunity and not the loss of more jobs.

To that end I think that we have three things that we should do.

One, we need to explore, we need to find domestic energy sources and make sure we clean them up not just continue business as usual. Nothing sickens us more than the troubling realization that we are sending hundreds of billions of dollars overseas and in essence funding both sides in the war on terror. When we see other countries use that money from oil to build bombs used against our soldiers, we must set clean energy independence as our highest priority. We must use our abundant domestic resources of

coal, of natural gas, of oil but clean them up so we are not polluting this planet and leaving it dirtier than when we came.

The second thing we have to do is conservation; many of our local businesses in Southwest Pennsylvania are developing a wide range of energy savings technologies and building materials. We recognize that our homes, farms, factories, and offices perhaps use only about 40 percent of the energy effectively but they pay for 100 percent. And it is unacceptable for our economy that we waste so much. We have to work on ways of conserving our resources. We must make these changes in our manufacturing, transportation, and even our education to understand how we can conserve better and save money.

The third goal, however, is innovation. This is the Apollo project of our generation. And we need the ideas, the science, the research, and the funding to get there. We need to have a sense of awe and wonder of what we can do. We cannot afford to have commercials by special interest groups sniping each other with people pretending that there is no such thing as clean coal. I suppose the Wright Brothers faced the same sort of challenge when other people said these bicycle makers could never fly. If there is any country on this world that can clean up our energy it's us here in the USA.

My friends, the Nobel prize to find someone who will find a lump of coal and find a way of getting all the energy out of it, not 40 percent, and do it without pollution. This is what we ought to be funding.

We need to do so many things with innovation. But while I must say I am in agreement with many parts of this legislation before us, I hope the door is still open to do some other things that deal with innovation.

I am deeply concerned that what this bill will do with "cap and trade" is not really stop pollution because it merely sells pollution credits and does not reinvest in cleaning up our coal plants.

And I believe will actually send many jobs to China, to Brazil and to India. We have to gather together and find ways that we can use our abundant resources in effective ways.

We can do that but that also means we have to put that money back in these things and not siphon it off and send it off to the federal government to use for other sources. It's going to take a lot of work here and I hope as we proceed in this we remember the awe and wonder which we were all, many of us were inspired back in the sixties and think instead of sniping at each other with regard to political gain.

We must gather together, because the end is something we have to agree on, energy independence and a clean planet with a good future for our children and their children.