



United States Senate Committee on
Energy & Natural Resources



Senator Lisa Murkowski, Alaska, *Chairman*

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Sen. Murkowski: Concerns About Electric Reliability Must be taken Seriously as Grid Modernizes

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, today said reliability and affordability must remain core considerations as innovation, the deployment of new technologies, and the impact of public policy choices begin to transform the U.S. power system. Advances in technologies, including smart grid and storage, must be carefully integrated as the grid is modernized in order to maintain reliability and avoid unintended consequences, Murkowski, the chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, said at Tuesday’s oversight hearing.



(Click to view video)

“With the rise of distributed generation and smart grid technologies, Americans are gaining more control over how they use and consume electricity but, as a result, the grid must be even more closely integrated. Innovation and new technologies, such as commercially viable storage, are clearly necessary to assist in this transformation,” Murkowski said. “The reliability of our nation’s grid is therefore paramount, and the impact of policy directives must be seriously considered – not dismissed as somehow anti-environment or anti-future.”

Murkowski underscored the need for a more robust electric grid that enhances reliability by integrating the fruits of advanced grid research to address the nation’s electricity transmission and distribution challenges. She also cautioned that such a highly complex transformation would not happen overnight.

“The innovation underway in the electricity sector is impressive and exciting. It is also complex

and advancing at a rapid pace. That is why it's so important to increase our understanding and only then propose policy changes," Murkowski said.



(Click photo for video of Murkowski discussing development of microgrids in Alaska)

Murkowski said provisions protecting grid reliability and improving energy efficiency, as well as other issues related to power delivery, are being considered for inclusion in the broader energy legislation currently being drafted.

“We have an opportunity to generate electricity that is more abundant, affordable, clean, diverse and secure – but we must fully understand the changes that are underway and how they impact the grid. It’s also crucial that we recognize that much of this is happening at the state level and that the cornerstone role for the federal government is one of research to promote innovation,” Murkowski said. “It’s imperative that we avoid unintended consequences that can be caused by bad policy choices. No one wants to make electricity less reliable or cost effective.”

Chairman Murkowski’s opening statement is available on the energy panel’s [website](#). Archived video of the full hearing is also available [here](#).

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