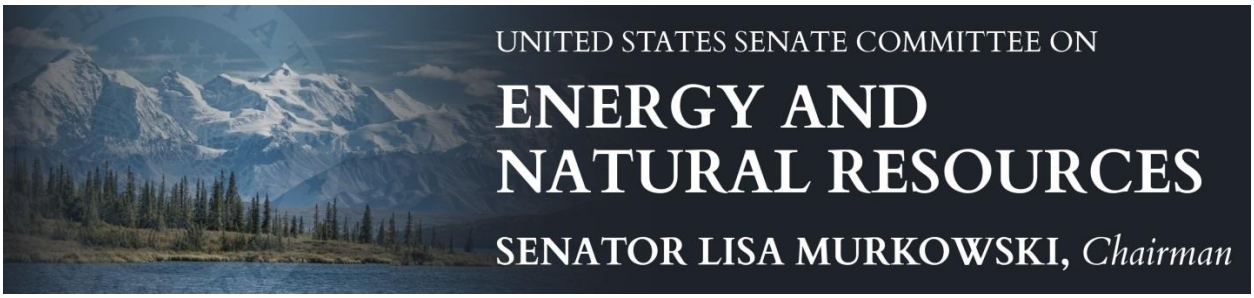

Opening Statement
Oversight Hearing on Innovation Solutions for Climate Change
Chairman Lisa Murkowski
April 11, 2019

Good morning, everyone. The Committee will come to order.

We're here to continue our ongoing dialogue and conversation about the electricity sector, climate change, and opportunities for innovative technologies that will further reduce our greenhouse gas emissions.

During a hearing we held in March, we discussed the reductions that have already taken place in the electricity sector – largely driven by nearly flat demand growth, low cost natural gas, and the declining cost of renewable technologies like solar. Although we saw an uptick in 2018 driven by robust growth, U.S. emissions have declined in seven of the last ten years and are now 14 percent lower than in 2005.

We know that's impressive, but we also know that these trends are not always being replicated around the world – in fact we know for a fact they are not. When Dr. Fatih Birol, Executive Director of the International Energy Agency, appeared before the committee in February, he noted that global demand for electricity is on track to increase by 60 percent by 2040. As a result, electricity is now the "largest target for energy investment."

Greater use of electricity will almost certainly lead to an increase in global emissions. The opportunity we have in front of us is to foster an innovation ecosystem here in the United States that can lead to energy breakthroughs that deliver cleaner, more affordable, and more reliable energy technologies.

The United States leads the world in energy innovation. Our national labs and universities, as well as the private sector, are developing technologies that could be deployed around the world to reduce our emissions. And that could occur through a number of pathways – whether it's advanced nuclear; carbon capture, utilization and storage; energy storage; or a technology that is just starting to show its potential.

We've seen firsthand the opportunity for moving to lower-emission technologies realized in my state. In Igiugig, an Alaskan village with a year-round population of about 70 people, a little bit more in the summer, is they're installing a turbine system that will create emission-free electricity using river currents. The City of Kodiak generates nearly all of its electricity, almost 100 percent, from renewable resources, including hydropower and wind. In Southeast Alaska, the Haines Brewing Company is going to add more solar to their facility to power more of their beer production. And it's just kind of an added benefit that they make really great beer on top of it.

Alaska is feeling the effects of climate change but our communities are making strides to responsibly reduce their emissions. Alaskans are pioneers, and we kind of view ourselves as this "living laboratory" for innovation. We figure if you can prove the technology out there in sometimes harsh environment where it's very remote, if it works in the Arctic, trust me, it can probably work just about anywhere else.

We also recognize the transition to cleaner resources will take time. There is no overnight, magic-wand solution, as much as many would want it to be that way. We simply don't have unlimited amounts of taxpayer dollars. We can't simply replace markets with mandates and call it good. And so even as we take real steps to promote clean energy, know that I'm going to be working to fully protect our energy security as well as keeping our energy costs affordable.

This is a timely discussion, but also a nuanced one on the policy side. So we've got some impressive witness with us this morning to join the conversation.
We have:

- Dr. Arun Majumdar, Co-Director of the Precourt Institute for Energy at Stanford University;
- Ms. Sarah Ladislaw, Director and Senior Fellow at the Energy and National Security Program Center for Strategic and International Studies;
- Mr. Abe Silverman, Vice President and Deputy General Counsel at NRG Energy, Inc.;
- Mr. Robert Bryce, Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute; and
- Mr. David Sandalow, Inaugural Fellow at the Center for Global Energy Policy at Columbia University

So, great panel to help us discuss innovative solutions that will work to reduce our greenhouse gases.

With that, I turn to my friend and Ranking Member, Senator Manchin.

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