



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**

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## Opening Statement

**Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)**

Joint Subcommittee Hearing:  
Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight  
Subcommittee on Environment  
*Missing the Target: CEQ's Meritless Selection of SBTi*

November 30, 2023

Today's hearing is the second oversight hearing in two months to focus on a proposed rule that would bring much-needed transparency to the greenhouse gas emissions of the federal contracting sector. What I said two months ago remains true today: more data is a good thing, greater transparency is a good thing, and the federal government will make more informed procurement decisions if the goals of this rulemaking are realized.

One thing that certainly has not changed in the last two months is the dire nature of the climate crisis. It confronts us with ever-increasing urgency as coastal waters rise, extreme weather events occur more frequently, and every facet of our society struggles to adapt. It is absolutely right, and indeed imperative, that the federal government use every policy tool at its disposal to meet the challenge of climate change. The Biden Administration is providing unprecedented climate leadership with a whole-of-government approach, and this rulemaking is one important piece of that broader effort.

I noted previously that procurement policy is an important lever for the federal government to use in reducing its own greenhouse gas emissions while prodding the private sector to do the same. The U.S. government possesses enormous influence as the world's largest purchaser of goods and services, with a staggering \$630 billion spent in 2021 alone. Federal procurement decisions carry tremendous weight due to the size and diversity of the federal contracting sector. But until now, the federal government has neglected to use this leverage to better understand the emissions of its contractors and the potential emission reduction opportunities that may exist throughout federal procurement supply chains. In ignoring contractors' climate risk, the federal government has failed to properly protect its investments and has exposed American taxpayers to the higher costs and long-term hazards posed by a vulnerable federal supply chain. The proposed rule takes an important and long overdue first step to rectify this mistake.

The goals of this proposed rule are grounded in common sense. It takes a basic step towards providing the federal government with the data it needs to make smart, climate-conscious procurement decisions. This is a worthy goal, and one that the federal government has every right to pursue as part of its obligation to be a responsible steward of taxpayer dollars.

I must admit that I find the timing and focus of today's hearing to be strange. We are rehashing the same conversation that we had in September. Just like at the last hearing two months ago, the rule remains in the proposal stage while the Federal Acquisition Regulatory Council considers public comments. Indeed, it is the FAR Council that is promulgating this rulemaking and leading the process. Yet our sole witness today is an official from the Council on Environmental Quality, which is not directly involved in the rulemaking process and presumably cannot speak to many aspects of the rulemaking that would be most pertinent to the committee's oversight. This will necessarily limit the hearing's ability to inform the committee's deliberations regarding this rulemaking.

Despite these limitations, I hope the discussion at today's hearing will be constructive. The proposed rule is an important attempt to bring greater transparency to the climate impact of the federal procurement sector. I fully support that objective, even as the final details remain to be worked out. Proposed rules can always be improved before they are finalized, but the goal of this rule is sensible and consistent with the direction the private sector is already heading. I hope today's hearing stays grounded in this rule's important goals, rather than becoming distracted by cherry-picked concerns and unsubstantiated speculation.

Thank you to the witness for appearing before the committee today. I yield back.