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

Ranking Member Jamaal Bowman (D-NY)
of the Subcommittee on Energy

Subcommittee on Energy Hearing
Unleashing American Power: The Development of Next Generation Energy Infrastructure

March 23, 2023

I thank Chairman Williams for convening today's hearing. While I would like to give attention to each topic, I must first celebrate my home state of New York for leading the way by enacting legislation this past December that will create the strongest-in-the-nation cybersecurity protections for my state's energy grid. This action, taken during a global surge in cyberattacks against critical infrastructure, will help ensure New York's grid remains reliable and secure as we move quickly to 100% clean energy.

I also want to recognize the bipartisan grid security bill led last Congress by my colleague Congressman Bera, which supports federal R&D to advance solutions to protect our nation's electric grid systems from a range of attacks. I hope that my Republican colleagues will continue to support Mr. Bera's important legislation this Congress.

Now I'll turn my attention to the other two topics for the hearing – pipelines and hydrogen. I chaired our Subcommittee's hearing on hydrogen last year, and my cautiously optimistic stance has not wavered. Today, I restate my view that "green hydrogen," produced with 100% clean electricity, has the clearest potential to help meet our climate goals in certain sectors. And when hydrogen is made from fossil fuels, we should not call it clean. Grassroots communities and experts are sounding the alarm about the fossil fuel industry's overreach here, and we in Congress should listen – *to be an effective climate solution, hydrogen must be produced cleanly and used wisely*.

I recognize that hydrogen could significantly decarbonize heavy industry — like steel and cement production — and may have some other important applications. However, this energy source is not a climate solution if it harms local communities. Most of the hydrogen available today is made from methane or coal. And blended hydrogen-methane gas is proving to be more dangerous than methane alone. Yet, across the country utilities and gas companies suggest this is a part of their near-term decarbonization strategy, apparently ignoring the continued energy and health burdens on low-income communities.

Research has established that the transportation of hydrogen and hydrogen blends by pipeline has unique risks, particularly in the distribution lines that connect to the buildings we live and work in. We are also just learning that hydrogen generally has more significant warming potential than

is typically recognized and is easily leaked. These facts cannot be overlooked as hundreds of billions of dollars in public and private investment are primed to fund nearly 700 global proposed hydrogen projects.

No one believes in the urgency of providing climate solutions more than myself, but I encourage my colleagues to proceed with caution. We must seek to understand better the impact hydrogen may have on our atmosphere and chart a path forward where hydrogen is deployed as a safe, strategic, and truly clean energy solution. Better understanding not only the technical gaps, but also the environmental impacts is absolutely necessary. That said, I hope you'll join me today in asking the difficult questions that we should be asking about this emerging industry, and on the best ways to ensure that we minimize and ultimately eliminate the negative impacts of current and any future pipelines used for these and other purposes. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses, and I yield back.