



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

Opening Statement

**Chairman Conor Lamb (D-PA)
of the Subcommittee on Energy**

Energy Subcommittee Field Hearing:
*How the Domestic Nuclear Industry Boosts Local Economies,
Curbs Emissions, and Strengthens National Security*
May 3, 2019

I'll begin by welcoming all of our guests to Western Pennsylvania. We are lucky to have several of my colleagues from the Committee on Science, Space and Technology and as the hearing goes on you'll hear more about them and their districts in the great states of Illinois, Michigan, Texas and California. I just want to say thank you for taking the time to visit us here and learn more about our role in nuclear power.

I also want to thank our witnesses, who we will introduce individually, for taking the time to be with us and for devoting your energy to this subject. On behalf of the people I represent, especially here in Beaver County but all over Western Pennsylvania, I thank you for your interest in this issue that hits so close to home for us.

We are holding this hearing in the shadow of America's first civilian nuclear plant and we're doing that for a reason. It's time for us to remember that it wasn't so long ago we were bold and adventurous enough to do something that people thought was impossible — make nuclear energy into an instrument of peace rather than a weapon of war.

President Eisenhower knew this could be done — knew it had to be done — and I think all the Western Pennsylvanians in the room feel an immense pride that he picked us to build the first plant. A lot of people know about the role that Pittsburgh's steelworkers played in the war effort but our leading role in nuclear power isn't as well known. But it should be, because it didn't have to be us. President Eisenhower didn't build the reactor here because of something that we had in the ground that no one else had. He picked us because of great businesses like Duquesne Light and Westinghouse, and because of the work ethic and courage of our people.

People were uneasy — afraid about nuclear power — a lot of towns would have said no. The people of Western Pennsylvania said yes, and they have worked hard to provide safe, reliable nuclear power ever since. In fact, our workers have constantly upgraded this plant to the point where it is now considered one of the safest nuclear plants in the United States.

But times have changed, and today the power station that replaced Shippingport — Beaver Valley, which we toured — is scheduled to close in 2021 if something isn't done. Not at risk — scheduled. There are many reasons, but the fact is this: thousands of people worked hard to

build, maintain and operate this plant. Many of those thousands are veterans of our armed forces. They deserve better than to have their life's work pass into history, especially because their work has never been more important.

See — the people who make this plant run allow us to get electricity without emitting any carbon. In Pennsylvania, 40 percent of our electrical power is supplied by nuclear plants. A lot of people don't know that, but we're going to make sure people know it. 40 percent. We will never make progress on climate change without saving these plants and keeping these workers at work.

President Eisenhower is remembered for winning the war, keeping the peace, and building our national infrastructure. All of these things are related and they helped us lead the world in the 20th century.

If we could ask President Eisenhower about the great challenges of the 21st century, I think he would recognize them and tell us that this critical infrastructure — built and run by thousands of hardworking Americans here in Pennsylvania — is as critical today as ever. We have to protect ourselves and our children from climate change and to do that we need nuclear. We have to protect jobs for tradesmen and women, for veterans, for scientists, to have a strong country. And when foreign countries go to build nuclear plants — which they will — we have to have them turn to us instead of our adversaries.