LOTSIXTEEN

Committee: House Energy & Commerce Committee
Event: Full Committee Markup
Date: July 20, 2026

Executive Summary:

On Monday, July 20, 2026, and Tuesday, July 21, 2026, the House Energy & Commerce Committee convened a business meeting to mark up 17 bills. **All 17 bills advanced out of Committee**. The readout below focuses on the following bills related to lowering energy costs associated with data center and artificial intelligence (AI) development, strengthening critical minerals supply chains, and modernizing the grid:

- Ratepayer Protection Act (H.R. 9340)
- High-Capacity Grid Act (H.R. 6633)
- Advanced Transmission Technology to Reduce Rates Act (H.R. 9335)
- Pipeline Safety Authorization Act of 2026 (H.R. 9338)
- Load Forecasting Enhancement Act (H.R. 9332)
- Affordable Innovation for the Grid Act (H.R. 9339)
- Protecting Families from AI Data Center Energy Costs Act (H.R. 6529)
- CHARM Act (H.R. 9617)
- EMRTAI Authorization Act of 2026 (H.R. 9616)

Member Toplines:[1]

Chair Brett Guthrie (R-KY-02): Guthrie highlighted bipartisan support for the Ratepayer Protection Act and explained that the bill encourages states to adopt large-load tariffs so data centers, not ratepayers, cover grid upgrade costs. He also pointed to reauthorization of the pipeline safety program and two bipartisan critical minerals recovery bills aimed at reducing reliance on China.

Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ-06): Pallone raised concerns about the impacts of rapid data center growth on electricity costs, air and water quality, and the health of the grid, arguing that stronger federal guardrails are needed to ensure companies pay their fair share of electricity bills. He expressed support for the bipartisan Pipeline Safety Authorization Act of 2026 and called for additional action to improve grid reliability and accelerate clean energy deployment.

Rep. Bob Latta (R-OH-05): Latta highlighted seven bills advanced by the Energy Subcommittee aimed at improving energy affordability, modernizing the grid, and supporting emerging industries such as AI and domestic manufacturing. He specifically emphasized the importance of the Load Forecasting Enhancement Act and the Ratepayer Protection Act, noting that the

[1] Links for a number of opening statements were not available at the time of this memo's distribution.

bills would help protect residential ratepayers from bearing the costs associated with new large-scale data centers.

Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA-07): Matsui expressed support for Ratepayer Protection Act and the Protecting Families from AI Data Center Energy Costs Act, but argued that additional measures are needed to address the broader impacts of data center growth. She emphasized that technology companies should fund necessary electric grid and water infrastructure upgrades rather than passing costs on to ratepayers. Matsui also raised concerns about data center pollution, impacts on local water supplies, and the need for greater transparency in siting decisions. She called for a comprehensive framework to guide how data centers are sited, built, and operated to protect constituents.

Rep. Gary Palmer (R-AL-06): Palmer spoke in support of the CHARM Act, arguing that U.S. reliance on China and other foreign sources for critical minerals poses economic and national security risks. He highlighted the potential to recover minerals from domestic sources and noted that recycling could help strengthen supply chains. Palmer said the bill would direct the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop a national critical mineral recovery strategy and coordinate federal efforts to identify barriers and expand domestic recovery opportunities.

Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY-20): Tonko highlighted the CHARM Act and the EMRTAI Authorization Act of 2026 as good first steps towards recovering critical minerals from waste and environmental remediation. He called for broader federal action on the impacts of data centers and AI, arguing that future policies must address not only electricity cost issues, but also the emissions, water usage, and other community impacts stemming from their rapid development.

Rep. Kathy Castor (D-FL-14): Castor emphasized the need to protect consumers from rising electricity costs as hyperscale data centers increase demand on the electric grid. She also highlighted the merits of the Ratepayer Protection Act. Castor also called for reforms to the interconnection process to accelerate the deployment of new energy resources and lower costs. She argued that additional action is needed to reduce energy prices and modernize the nation's energy infrastructure.

Legislation of Interest Considered:

Ratepayer Protection Act (H.R. 9340)

I. *Member Toplines:*
- Rep. **Gabe Evans** (R-CO-08) argued that rapid growth in AI data centers shouldn't result in higher electricity bills for residential and small business customers. He said the bill would encourage states to adopt standards requiring large data centers to bear the full cost of the generation, transmission, and distribution upgrades they necessitate, while preserving state flexibility and preventing costs from falling to ratepayers.
- Rep. **Kim Schrier** (D-WA-08) argued that rapidly growing electricity demand from hyperscale data centers is contributing to rising utility costs, noting that many of her constituents' utility bills have increased by roughly 50 percent in the last two years. She contended that ratepayers should not bear the costs of

necessary grid upgrades and called for guardrails requiring data center companies to pay for the infrastructure they need.

- Rep. **Lori Trahan** (D-MA-03) argued that data center developers, not residential customers, should bear the costs of the infrastructure and energy needed to support their customers. She stated that Congress must also address the broader impacts of data centers to ensure AI development doesn't impose additional burdens on communities.
- Rep. **Diana Harshbarger** (R-TN-01) stressed that the bill, combined with President Trump's ratepayer protection pledge and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's (FERC) recent show cause orders, demonstrates a shared commitment to supporting transparency in rates and preventing unfair cost shifting.
- Rep. **Debbie Dingell** (D-MI-06) echoed that communities should not bear the costs created by large data centers or be excluded from decisions affecting their neighborhoods. She emphasized the need for greater transparency and public engagement regarding the impacts of data centers on local communities.
- Rep. **Darren Soto** (D-FL-09) stated that while data centers are important to the nation's economic and AI future, their significant demands on electricity, water, and local infrastructure require stronger safeguards for communities. He emphasized the importance of local control over data center siting and supported allowing utilities to recover costs from large data center customers rather than residential ratepayers.
- Rep. **Lizzie Fletcher** (D-TX-07) expressed concern over the rapid expansion of data centers in Texas, claiming that the 582 operational and planned facilities in Texas would potentially add more than 400,000 megawatts (MW) of demand to the grid.
- Rep. **Nanette Barragán** (D-CA-44) expressed support for the bill and reiterated that residential consumers and small businesses shouldn't bear the cost of electricity demands of AI data centers. While she described the bill as an important first step, she called for additional action to address the environmental justice and public health issues caused by data center development.
- Rep. **Troy Carter** (D-LA-02) claimed that while large data center investments can bring significant economic benefits, the costs of the grid upgrades they require should be borne by developers rather than residential customers and small businesses. He said the bill provides state utility regulators with a flexible framework to ensure hyperscale data centers pay for the infrastructure they need while preserving state authority over implementation.
- Rep. **Julie Fedorchak** (R-ND-At Large) emphasized that properly structured cost allocation can allow data centers and other large loads to support economic growth while protecting ratepayers, citing state efforts to ensure large customers pay their fair share.
- Rep. **Jennifer McClellan** (D-VA-04) cited Virginia's experience as a major data center hub, emphasizing the need for cost allocation policies that require large load customers to pay for the infrastructure they drive while also calling for additional efforts to expand renewable energy and storage resources to meet growing demand.

- Rep. **Jay Obernolte** (D-CA-23) stated that the bill would provide public assurance that AI data center development will not increase residential electricity costs while allowing the U.S. to maintain its leadership in AI innovation. He emphasized that data center developers have strong incentives to secure and pay for their own reliable power supplies, which he argued could ultimately benefit the grid and lower costs. He warned that foreign adversaries are attempting to undermine public support for data center expansion.
- Rep. **Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez** (D-NY-14) raised concerns about the broader community impacts of data center development, arguing that local residents should have greater transparency, input, and protections regarding projects that affect land use, public health, water resources, and infrastructure. She criticized the potential environmental and health consequences of data center-related facilities in disadvantaged communities and argued that discussions about AI expansion must also address impacts on workers and communities, not solely technological advancement.
- Pallone highlighted that local opposition to data center development is driven by legitimate concerns rather than foreign influence, citing concerns about rising electricity rates and environmental impacts in his district. He emphasized that calls for safeguards and greater oversight reflect constituents' concerns about how data centers affect communities, ratepayers, and local resources.
- Palmer noted that data centers can be developed responsibly by building them on existing industrial sites where available infrastructure and new generation sources could minimize impacts on communities and potentially benefit the grid. He highlighted the importance of continuing to expand data center capacity to maintain U.S. competitiveness in AI, while calling for bipartisan efforts to address concerns and support responsible development.
- Rep. **Diana DeGette** (D-CO-01) acknowledged that the bill is a step toward addressing data center impacts but argued that it fails to address significant concerns related to water use and water quality. She emphasized that data center development in water-stressed areas could strain local resources and increase costs for consumers. She called for greater water-use transparency and consideration of water and energy impacts together.
    - Palmer highlighted emerging cooling technologies designed to reduce impacts on local water systems. He noted that many facilities are moving toward closed-loop cooling systems and glycol-based heat transfer systems, which can minimize reliance on community water supplies for cooling operations.

II. Amendments:

- Evans 01 - Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute.
    - Evans introduced the amendment, arguing that the amendment better aligns the bill with its goal of addressing community concerns over rising electricity costs and ensuring large data center projects don't increase costs for other ratepayers.
    - Guthrie supported the amendment, arguing that Congress must balance the need to expand AI infrastructure with protections for consumers and communities facing rising electricity demand. He emphasized that large

energy users should bear the costs of necessary grid upgrades while states retain authority to develop appropriate standards. He underscored the importance of community input, local zoning authority, and broader permitting reforms to support responsible infrastructure development.
    - Tonko expressed support for the amendment and raised concerns about the bill's definition of large load customers. He argued that the threshold and scope of covered entities should be more narrowly defined but urged the Committee to consider lowering the threshold from 100 MW to 50 MW to ensure the bill captures all projects capable of significantly affecting the grid and ratepayers.
    - Latta highlighted state-level efforts, including Ohio's data center-specific tariff, as examples of how regulators can use flexible rate structures to prevent residential customers from bearing the costs of new large energy loads.
    - Rep. **John Joyce** (R-PA-13) supported the amendment, arguing that AI growth must be balanced with affordable and reliable electricity for consumers. He stated that data center developers should be responsible for the costs of infrastructure upgrades needed to support their projects rather than shifting those costs to local ratepayers
    - The amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to by voice vote.

III. *Final Vote on H.R. 9340*: **Passed out of Committee as amended, by a vote of 52-0.**

High-Capacity Grid Act (H.R. 6633)

I. *Member Toplines:*
    - Fedorchak argued that the U.S. must modernize its aging transmission infrastructure to meet rising electricity demand from electrification and domestic manufacturing growth. She stated that the bill would encourage utilities to deploy advanced grid technologies, such as high-capacity conductors, to increase transmission capacity, improve reliability, and reduce costs without waiting years for new transmission projects to be permitted and built.

II. *Amendments:*
    - Fedorchak 01 - Provides flexibility in deploying advanced conductors.
        - Fedorchak explained that her amendment would allow exemptions when advanced conductors would be unsafe, cost prohibitive, or unnecessary for improving grid capacity and efficiency. She argued the amendment balances the need to modernize the electric grid with the need to protect reliability, affordability, and utility flexibility.
        - The amendment was agreed to by voice vote.

III. *Final Vote on H.R. 6633:* **Passed out of Committee as amended by a vote of 49-0.**

Advanced Transmission to Reduce Rates Act (H.R. 9335)

I. *Member Toplines:*
    - Rep. **Craig Goldman** (R-TX-12) argued that grid congestion increases costs for families and businesses and that advanced transmission technologies can improve efficiency without imposing federal mandates. He said the bill would

provide technical assistance and reduce regulatory barriers to help states modernize the grid and lower energy costs.
- Pallone expressed that he supports the bill overall but heavily criticized a provision exempting certain projects funded by the Department of Energy (DOE) from review under the *National Environmental Policy Act*. While he called it unnecessary, he stated that he would still support the bill because of the broader benefits of expanding grid capacity

II. *Final Vote on H.R. 9335:* **Passed out of Committee by a vote of 39-10.**

Pipeline Safety Authorization Act of 2026 (H.R. 9338)

I. *Amendments:*
- Weber 01 - Amendment in the Nature of a Substitute.
  - Rep. **Randy Weber** (R-TX-14) introduced the amendment, arguing that it represents a bipartisan effort to strengthen oversight and improve the safety of the nation's pipeline infrastructure while protecting First Amendment rights.
  - Pallone supported the amendment, highlighting that it strengthens the original bill by increasing funding for pipeline safety programs, preserving key infrastructure grant programs, and enhancing the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's (PHMSA) enforcement capabilities. He also emphasized that the revised bill protects First Amendment rights by narrowing the criminal penalties to only those deemed as being intentionally directed towards endangering pipeline safety.
  - Fletcher supported the amendment, arguing that it strengthens PHMSA's ability to oversee pipeline safety. While she praised the amendment's bipartisan nature and protections for both public safety and First Amendment rights, she urged Congress to continue modernizing pipeline safety by supporting forward-looking initiatives in the future.
  - Rep. **Kevin Mullin** (D-CA-15) expressed dissatisfaction with the amended bill, arguing that certain provisions would undermine PHMSA's ability to impose safety conditions on special permits. He urged the committee to reconsider the bill so a revised version that prioritizes safety over regulatory shortcuts can be advanced.
  - Schrier emphasized the urgency with which Congress must strengthen pipeline safety oversight in light of recent spills and past accidents in her district. While she stated that she will support the bill as a necessary update, she asserted that additional legislative efforts are needed to ensure companies are adequately safeguarding their pipelines.
  - Carter (LA) argued that maintaining strong pipeline safety standards is essential to protecting workers, communities, and the nation's energy infrastructure. He praised the amended bill for fully authorizing PHMSA's safety programs and preserving grants to modernize aging natural gas distribution systems.
  - Guthrie emphasized that the bill is a product of extensive bipartisan negotiations and helps modernize PHMSA's safety regulations to reflect

technological and operations advances. He stated that the bill would eliminate duplicative requirements and streamline certain permitting processes to reflect relevant safety standards.
    - The amendment in the nature of a substitute was agreed to by voice vote.

II. *Final Vote on H.R. 9338:* **Passed out of Committee by a vote of 41-8.**

Load Forecasting Enhancement Act (H.R. 9332)

I. *Member Toplines*
- Rep. **Troy Balderson** (R-KY-12) introduced the bill and argued that rapidly growing electricity demand from data centers, manufacturing, and electrification requires more accurate forecasting to maintain grid reliability and protect consumers. He said the bill would improve coordination between state regulators and FERC, promote best practices for load forecasting, and help ensure infrastructure investments are driven by genuine demand while preventing unnecessary costs from being passed on to ratepayers.
- Rep. **Rob Menendez** (D-NJ-08) emphasized that improved electricity demand forecasting is essential to maintaining grid reliability, preventing higher energy costs, and planning for future growth from data centers and other large electricity users. He described the bill as an important first step but called for additional efforts to increase transparency and accountability for data centers' energy use and their impacts on communities.
- Rep. **Buddy Carter** (R-GA-01) highlighted that the bill would improve coordination between FERC and public utility commissions, which he characterized as a necessary step to better anticipating rising energy demand. He stated that through this process, FERC would be able to provide Congress with informed recommendations to prepare for growing energy demand across diverse state energy systems.
- McClellan pointed to projections that have shown that data center energy consumption could double or triple in the next two years, emphasizing the urgency with which the U.S. must prepare for the increasing impact that data centers are going to have on the grid. Citing Virginia's experience as a major data center hub, she said local governments often lack the resources to fully assess grid impacts and called for greater stakeholder engagement across all levels of government to ensure communities share in the benefits of digital infrastructure while mitigating its costs.

II. *Amendments:*
- Tonko 044 - Establishes the Electric Load Forecasting Technical Assistance Program.
    - Tonko explained that his amendment would explicitly authorize DOE to provide technical assistance on electricity demand forecasting. He argued that DOE and its national labs possess valuable expertise that should be leveraged to support regional forecasting boards, utilities, and other stakeholders as they prepare for uncertain load growth driven by data centers and other emerging demands.

        - Balderson opposed the amendment on the grounds that it would create an overly broad and open-ended DOE technical assistance program without sufficient safeguards for taxpayer resources. He maintained that the amendment could create conflicting guidance, unnecessary mandates, and additional costs without adequate oversight.
        - The amendment failed by a vote of 21-26.

III. *Final Vote on H.R. 9332:* **Passed out of Committee by a vote of 47-0.**

Affordable Innovation for the Grid Act (H.R. 9339)

I. *Member Toplines:*
    - Harshbarger emphasized that advanced technologies like AI and high-performance computing can help modernize the electric grid, improve reliability, and reduce costs. She noted that a coordinated assessment by DOE, FERC, and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation would help identify effective applications for these tools, including accelerating interconnection reviews, improving predictive maintenance, and supporting more efficient grid operations.
    - Mullin echoed Harshbarger's points and stated that the bill would encourage utilities to responsibly adopt emerging technologies to address rising electricity demand and modernize the nation's energy infrastructure.

II. *Final Votes on H.R. 9339:* **Passed out of Committee by a vote of 44-0.**

Protecting Families from AI Data Center Energy Costs Act (H.R. 6529)

I. *Member Toplines:*
    - Rep. **Greg Landsman** (D-OH-01) contended that FERC should develop a national framework to ensure data center-related electricity costs are not shifted onto residential ratepayers. He emphasized the need for collaboration among regulators and stakeholders to establish best practices that protect communities from rising energy costs.
    - Rep. **Morgan Griffith** (R-VA-09) supported the bill, emphasizing that data centers should pay their fair share of grid connection costs rather than shifting the bill to households, small businesses, and farmers. He said the bill would give consumers and regulators a voice as FERC evaluates how to allocate costs associated with growing large load electricity demand. He added that the bill's required reports would help inform FERC proceedings and future congressional action on data center impacts.

II. *Final Vote on H.R. 6529:* **Passed out of Committee by a vote of 44-0.**

CHARM Act (H.R. 9617)

I. *Member Toplines:*
    - Palmer argued that China's control over critical mineral supply chains requires coordinated federal action to strengthen domestic sources. He highlighted opportunities to recover minerals from legacy mines, coal ash, electronic waste, and lithium-ion batteries while reducing regulatory barriers that hinder investment and innovation. Palmer said the bill would direct the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop a national critical mineral recovery strategy

and identify ways to strengthen domestic supply chains through recovered materials.
- Tonko supported the bill and emphasized the need for a national strategy to recover critical minerals from discarded materials. He stated that EPA is well positioned to identify regulatory, technological, and economic barriers preventing materials from being reused and recycled. He highlighted the bill's potential to strengthen domestic critical mineral supply chains through responsible collection, reuse, and recycling efforts.
- Soto noted the importance of recycling critical minerals, especially since importing such minerals is becoming increasingly difficult given China's dominance in mineral processing.

II. Final Vote on H.R. 9617: **Passed out of Committee by a vote of 47-0.**

EMRTAI Authorization Act of 2026 (H.R. 9616)

I. Member Toplines:
- Rep. **August Pfluger** (R-TX-11) stressed the importance of the U.S. reducing reliance on foreign sources of critical minerals, particularly China, by developing domestic supply chains. He highlighted emerging technologies that can recover critical minerals from unconventional sources. Pfluger stated that the bill would direct EPA to support efforts to identify and recover critical materials, addressing the nation's supply chain vulnerability and also advancing environmental remediation efforts.
- Landsman underscored the bill's grant program to help identify and recover critical minerals from contaminated sites such as abandoned mines and Superfund sites. He said the bill would support both environmental cleanup efforts and strengthen domestic critical mineral supplies.

II. Final Vote on H.R. 9616: **Passed out of Committee by a vote of 48-0.**