



Hearing on “China’s Domestic Energy Challenges and Its Growing Influence over International Energy Markets”

April 24, 2025

Opening Statement of Commissioner Hal Brands

Thank you, Commissioner Goodwin, and thank you to our witnesses for participating in today’s hearing.

China has emerged as a pivotal force in international energy infrastructure and clean energy technologies. Its dominance in renewable energy technology, energy transmission and storage, and related supply chains threatens to create strategic leverage for Beijing and security risks for America and other countries.

Today, we will consider—among other issues—China’s emergence as a top financier of foreign energy infrastructure. Chinese policy banks and state-owned enterprises are funding and building power generation and transmission projects across emerging and developed economies. As with telecommunications nearly a decade earlier, officials in capitals around the world are now investigating the risks of Chinese investment and control over critical electrical infrastructure. Indeed, as the 2021 National Intelligence Assessment warns, Chinese-manufactured hardware could introduce hidden vulnerabilities such as remote kill switches and data collection capabilities.

Recent intrusions into U.S. infrastructure by state-sponsored actors like Volt Typhoon serve as a stark indicator of both Chinese capabilities and intent. When the United States raised concerns about these cyber operations last December, Chinese officials notably linked these activities to geopolitical tensions over Taiwan—a sobering reminder that energy infrastructure has become a potential battlefield in great power competition.

Yet critical minerals are perhaps the most vivid illustration of how Beijing leverages its central position in energy supply chains to support state interests. China secured a dominant market position through decades of state intervention. Now, recent restrictions on rare earth exports and mineral processing technology reveal a willingness to weaponize supply chain dependencies for strategic objectives. Moreover, China’s application of export restrictions on refined critical minerals shows an evolution in both the sophistication and assertiveness of its economic coercion toolkit.

Security of energy systems is vital to U.S. and global prosperity, as well as for the ability of U.S. and allied militaries to operate around the world. China’s growing influence as a supplier, builder, and in some cases owner or operator of energy infrastructure raises difficult questions about resilience, diversity of supply, and international cooperation. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on these issues, and I welcome their suggestions of steps Congress can take to mitigate these challenges.