

**COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

HEARING

Effectively Transforming Our Electric Delivery System to a Smart Grid

July 23, 2009

Statement of Subcommittee on Energy & Environment Ranking Member Bob Inglis (SC-4)

Good morning and thank you for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman.

At our last hearing, we discussed obstacles in getting renewable energy, wind and solar in particular, into the electricity market in a meaningful way. One of the biggest gaps we heard about was getting renewable energy onto a grid designed for centralized generation from conventional power plants. In order to move away from fossil fuels, we need to update the grid.

A smart grid presents many exciting opportunities. First, we'll be able to use distributed generation to supply our population centers, enabling a shift toward renewable power. Second, we'll improve efficiency and increase capacity on the electricity grid. Finally, we'll create a new model of consumer participation. With the two-way communication made possible by smart grid technologies, consumers will have access to new information about their energy use and prices and get more involved in how they use electricity.

So now we have to figure out how to get to a modern electricity grid. I'm looking forward to hearing from our witnesses about where we are now and where we have to go. Governments and professional associations will certainly play an important role in the research and development of smart grid technologies and in setting the standards that will govern the new electricity delivery system. Private enterprise will step in with cutting edge technology designed to integrate the grid, better manage peak loads, and give consumers the tools they need to make informed decisions.

I have several questions about the smart grid. We're working on developing a new grid and a new pattern of energy generation at the same time; I hope to learn how these efforts are working in tandem and if we're going forward at the right pace. I also wonder what the proper relationship between private and public investment is in a project like this that serves both interests together. Finally, the smart grid will support electricity from sources far away from population centers. While this will support development of renewable electricity, it may also support continued reliance on old and polluting coal facilities that operate in the same remote areas. I hope we can address these concerns today.

Thank you again for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman.