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NEWS

Manchin opens first climate hearing, calls for putting national needs over politics

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV), incoming chairman of the committee, convened the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Wednesday for a hearing to examine global climate trends from energy related sectors to consider where and how progress has been made in addressing climate change.

Senator Manchin stressed the need to put the priorities of our nation before partisan politics and to work together to combat the global climate challenge.

“Climate change is an issue critical not only to our states, and our nation, but to every country around the world. To address climate change, we must face it, head on, on a global scale and in every sector of our economy,” Sen. Manchin said.

“No doubt we will all have differing views on the best way to do that. But first, I believe we must begin with a common understanding of where we stand today, and what got us here. [I]t is abundantly clear that dwelling on partisan rhetoric shuts down debate, collaboration, and progress. As we look for ways to heal the divisions in our own country, I believe that one way for us to overcome our differences of opinion is by first grounding ourselves in the facts, which will serve as a guide going forward,” Manchin said.

Senator Manchin highlighted the declining costs of many energy technologies as a set of facts that make the case for

innovation. He also set the economic scene by pointing to downturn in coal communities and other traditional energy producing regions as well as continuing fossil fuel use in other countries as fundamental to the work of the Committee.

“As our energy mix has changed, concern about the impacts on these traditional energy communities has and will remain front of mind for many of our members and I will continue to work hard to ensure that those communities are given new opportunities to thrive, including as a member of the new IEA global commission focused on examining the impacts of a clean energy transition on individuals and communities. Although fossil fuel consumption is dropping on the U.S. power grid, the global trends in fossil fuel use should make us all recognize that fossil fuels aren’t going anywhere anytime soon, particularly in countries that are seeking to expand access to electricity and energy in order to address poverty.” Senator Manchin said.

“By pursuing an all-of-the-above energy policy and a broad array of emissions reducing technologies, we can simultaneously build our technology export opportunities and diplomatic relationships with those countries who choose to utilize their own fossil resources.”

Dr. Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency, highlighted the need to take action to reduce emissions both domestically and globally by utilizing new and innovative technologies, an opportunity he believes that the United States is uniquely positioned to lead on.

“The U.S. can set the global agenda like no other country in the world. In galvanizing support for rapid clean energy transitions, it can innovate to provide real-world solutions to energy challenges across the developing world, mobilize public and private finance for sustainable energy, and ensure that we have the tools not only to meet today’s energy challenge but the foresight to tackle those of tomorrow. With its boundless human ingenuity, rich resources and track record of successful innovation and commercialization of new technologies, the United States is extremely well placed to lead the world along with other countries in the development and deployment of energy technologies that can help ensure a secure, affordable and sustainable supply of energy for decades to come,” said Dr. Birol.

During the hearing, Sen. Manchin also questioned witnesses on holding nations accountable for their greenhouse gas

emissions and ambition in reaching shared goals under the Paris Agreement.

The hearing featured witnesses from the International Energy Agency, Resources for the Future, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas-Austin, and the Manhattan Institute.