



To: Members of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

From: National Taxpayers Union

Date: September 29, 2026

Subject: NTU's Views on September 30 Markup

I. Introduction

On behalf of National Taxpayers Union (NTU), the nation's oldest taxpayer advocacy organization, we write to express our views on legislation slated for consideration before the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on September 30. NTU applauds the Committee for your continued efforts to advance proposals that protect the reliability of our electric grid, promote American energy dominance, and reduce government burdens. However, we strongly urge the Committee to protect taxpayer interests by rejecting bills that are not fully paid for. As such, NTU strongly urges Committee members to support S. 465 and S. 1568, and oppose S. 4870, S. 5360, S. 5402, S. 3524, S. 3737, S. 1342, S. 4116, and S. 4406.

II. Legislation NTU Supports

NTU is proud to support the following bills at the Committee's markup and encourages all members to move them to the Senate floor for further consideration.

S. 465, The GRID Power Act from Sen. John Hoeven (R-ND). This legislation would enable grid operators to prioritize and expedite interconnection queue requests for projects that improve the reliability of the electric grid. It specifically gives FERC authority to develop rules to fast track critical generation that ensures greater reliability by allowing it to bypass the years-long wait in its interconnection queue, with the median wait time at about five years. Power grids are already buckling, and with power demands slated to surge in the years ahead, it is crucial that reliability be a top priority for new projects that are connected to the system. This legislation and subsequent regulations should create guardrails to prevent the government from putting its finger on the permitting process in favor of one industry and ensure that reliability of our grid is paramount above all else. *NTU Supports S. 465.*

S. 1568, the LIT Act of 2025 from Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT). This bill would allow for the return of traditional incandescent light bulbs into the American consumer market. Over the last 20 years, beginning in 2007 and culminating with an extreme regulatory expansion by the Biden Administration that tripled energy efficiency standards on future lightbulbs, the federal government has effectively been working to eliminate normal lightbulbs from American households. This has increased the cost of lightbulbs by almost 100%, and has reduced consumer choice for taxpayers. The federal government should allow consumers to make their own choice on the lightbulbs they need for their homes. *NTU Supports S. 1568.*

II. Legislation NTU Opposes

Without significant changes, NTU is opposing the following bills at the Committee's markup and encourages all members to reduce spending.

S. 4870, the Earth MRI Reauthorization Act from Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK). This legislation would reauthorize the Earth Mapping Resources Initiative program, which was last extended in 2021. While NTU has no issues with the goals of this legislation, it unfortunately reauthorizes a \$320 million program through 2031. This reauthorization is not offset with reductions elsewhere in the federal budget. One of the biggest challenges facing this Congress is how to resolve our growing spending crisis. According to the Congressional Budget Office, our annual deficit is nearing \$2 trillion, interest payments on our debt have become the fastest-growing part of the federal budget, and the national debt is over \$40 trillion. For those reasons, it's essential that funding—even "only" \$250 million—is offset with commensurate cuts or budgetary shifts elsewhere. *NTU Opposes S. 4870*

S. 5360, the Rural and Municipal Utility Cybersecurity Act from Sen. Dave McCormick (R-PA). This legislation would reauthorize the Rural and Municipal Utility Advanced Cybersecurity (RMUC) Grant and Technical Assistance Program through 2031. While NTU has no issues with the goals of this legislation, it unfortunately reauthorizes \$320 million in spending. This reauthorization is not offset with reductions elsewhere in the federal budget. One of the biggest challenges facing this Congress is how to resolve our growing spending crisis. According to the Congressional Budget Office, our annual deficit is nearing \$2 trillion, interest payments on our debt have become the fastest-growing part of the federal budget, and the national debt is over \$40 trillion. For those reasons, it's essential that funding—even "only" \$320 million—is offset with commensurate cuts or budgetary shifts elsewhere. *NTU Opposes S. 4870.*

S. 5402, the Western Water Reinvestment Act from Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR). This legislation would reauthorize a slew of programs intended to improve water resilience in the Pacific Northwest. While NTU has no issues with the goals of this legislation, it unfortunately reauthorizes hundreds of millions of dollars in spending. This reauthorization is not offset with reductions elsewhere in the federal budget. One of the biggest challenges facing this Congress is how to resolve our growing spending crisis. According to the Congressional Budget Office, our annual deficit is nearing \$2 trillion, interest payments on our debt have become the fastest-growing part of the federal budget, and the national debt is over \$40 trillion. For those reasons, it's essential that funding is offset with commensurate cuts or budgetary shifts elsewhere. *NTU Opposes S. 5402.*

S. 3524, the American Battlefield Protection Program Amendments Act of 2025 from Sen. Dave McCormick (R-PA). This legislation extends the American Battlefield Protection Program through 2035. While preserving historically significant battlefields is a perfectly laudable civic objective, this legislation imposes an unreasonable burden on taxpayers. First of all, this legislation authorizes \$20 million in new spending each fiscal year through 2035. Yet, on a more troubling note, this legislation would increase the federal government's cost share from 50% to 75% for preservation efforts that involve non-profits. At a time when the national debt has surpassed \$40 trillion, lawmakers should be fashioning solutions that reduce the federal government's financial obligations. Unfortunately for taxpayers, this legislation does the opposite. *NTU Opposes S. 3524.*

S. 3737, the GROW SMART Act from Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA). This legislation authorizes the federal government to provide financial and technical assistance to municipal, industrial, and other commercial entities to improve water conservation and management. To this end, this legislation authorizes \$5 million annually for fiscal years 2028 through 2034. Developing innovative solutions to conserve water is obviously perfectly laudable. Nevertheless, it isn't clear why federal taxpayers should fund projects that could be developed and executed at the local level. Without any offsets, this legislation represents an unnecessary burden on federal taxpayers. *NTU Opposes S. 3737.*

S. 1342, the Weatherization Assistance Program Improvements Act of 2025. This legislation would create a "Weatherization Readiness Fund," as part of the overall federal Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). This [program](#), initially created in 1976, helps lower energy costs for lower income households by paying for energy efficient home improvements. While this overall program serves a laudable goal of helping Americans in need, while lowering overall energy needs, taxpayers may wonder why the federal government is spending their dollars on a program that is primarily the responsibility of state and local governments. This new Readiness Fund would authorize new spending of \$150 million (\$30 million over the next five years) without providing a way to pay for it. At a time when the federal government is facing a massive debt of over \$40 trillion, now is not the time to create new federal programs that are not paid for. *NTU Opposes S. 1342.*

S. 4116, the Geo POWER Act from Sen. John Hickenlooper (D-CO). This legislation would authorize the Department of Energy to fund public and private entities that are seeking to develop geothermal power. Lowering energy costs is an important objective for lawmakers to pursue. But enacting industrial policies that pick winners and losers, rather than letting market forces allocate resources, is unlikely to foster substantive innovation. Moreover, transferring the risk of developing commercial energy projects to taxpayers is fiscally irresponsible at a time when the national debt eclipses \$40 trillion. Instead of enacting misguided industrial policies, the federal government should focus on solutions like permitting reform to actually let market forces bring down the cost of energy over the long run. *NTU Opposes S. 4116.*

S. 4406, the Next-Generation Geothermal Research and Development Act from Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV). This legislation directs the Department of Energy to create a comprehensive research and development initiative to promote the development of geothermal energy. Technological innovation is vital for unleashing cheap, abundant energy. Nevertheless, in a similar vein to S. 4116, federal interventions that pick winners and losers are not the answer. Expecting taxpayers to backstop the development of novel technologies is unreasonable given the state of the country's public finances. Instead, Congress should focus on solutions that give entrepreneurs and investors the confidence to take the necessary risks to develop innovative technologies on their own. *NTU Opposes S. 4406.*