



# UNITED STATES SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE

RANKING MEMBER CHUCK GRASSLEY

**Prepared Opening Statement by Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa  
Ranking Member, Senate Budget Committee  
Hearing on “Beyond the Breaking Point: The Fiscal Consequences of Climate Change on  
Infrastructure”  
Wednesday, July 26, 2023**



[VIDEO](#)

Before I begin my opening statement, I want to go back to a discussion that we had in this committee at the last hearing; it was a climate hearing.

Democrats on this committee touted a September 2021 IMF Working Paper on fossil fuel subsidies. This paper supposedly bolsters the view that climate catastrophe is on the horizon. You explicitly called it peer-reviewed in order to support your case.

However, Page 2 of the paper in question reads, “IMF Working Papers describe research in progress by the authors and are published to elicit comments and to encourage debate. The views expressed in IMF Working Papers are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the IMF, its Executive Board, or IMF management.”

Dr. Roger Pielke, a nonpartisan climate scientist who has testified at the invitation of both Democrats and Republicans, provided further insight on this study in response to a Question for the Record.

I asked him in that Question for the Record if a meeting between the IMF Director and Democratic senators has any bearing on whether an IMF working paper is peer-reviewed?

He responded, “The IMF working paper would be properly called a pre-print in the scientific community. That is, not the equivalent of a peer-reviewed paper.” And, “any single peer-reviewed paper is typically a small contribution to knowledge of a particular topic. Most papers offer less than that.”

He then followed up by saying, “peer-reviewed literature provides an ample resource for those who might wish to cherry pick those individual articles that might seem to offer the best support for a preferred position. This may be useful in political advocacy or posturing, but it does not offer a reliable route to effective analyses that might inform policy.”

If the committee is going to continue focusing on climate change, it’s important that we listen to nonpartisan scientists, rather than speculate with international bureaucrats.

Now, on to my opening statement.

Our nation is over 32 trillion dollars in debt, yet this committee is holding its 11th hearing on climate change.

President Biden is on television bragging about his economic performance when Americans can’t afford groceries and gasoline. Our spending is out of control, and Democrats haven’t written a budget in the past two years.

As I’ve said many times, climate change is a topic very worthy of discussion. I’m the father of the wind energy tax credit... I fought for renewable energy long before climate change became such a politically popular topic.

Democrats called this hearing to discuss the fiscal impact of climate change on infrastructure. I imagine we’ll hear some expensive estimates and alarming anecdotes about the impact of severe weather events on infrastructure. But, there isn’t a single expert in this room who is qualified as a climate scientist to attribute those estimates and anecdotes explicitly to climate change.

However, several panelists are more than capable of discussing major policy issues, like our broken federal permitting system, which continues to impede critical infrastructure projects. These projects would make our infrastructure more resilient to weather, stronger for everyday use, and would reduce emissions. But, environmental permitting delays, caused by environmental groups and their friends in Congress, continue to drive up federal infrastructure spending along with the energy bills and taxes of our constituents.

This is why I’m excited to welcome Mrs. Apsey. She’s the President and CEO of ITC Holdings, the largest independent electricity transmission company in the United States. ITC operates more than 6,600 circuit miles of transmission lines in Iowa, Minnesota, Illinois and Missouri.

As the head of a company that’s actually building infrastructure, Mrs. Apsey will highlight the real reasons why our electric grid is in peril and why we’re unable to complete transmission projects like Cardinal Hickory Creek in Dubuque County, Iowa.

Her testimony is one that my friends on the other side of the aisle simply don't want to hear. While accusing the fossil fuel industry of corruption and accusing those they disagree with of criminal activity, they've supported astronomical, unrealistic electric vehicle and renewable energy goals.

But, they're unwilling to support reforms to environmental legislation, like NEPA and the Clean Water Act, which impede the construction of the same infrastructure necessary to even attempt to meet their goals.

Few experts understand this better than Mr. Herrgott, President and CEO of The Permitting Institute.

He worked to limit permitting delays for infrastructure projects while at the White House, where he served as both the Executive Director of the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council and the Director of Infrastructure at the Council on Environment Quality.

Mr. Herrgott will show us that the Democrats' grand visions of renewable energy are just that, unless they reverse course on their disastrous environmental permitting positions.

From Iowa to Rhode Island, our nation's roads, bridges, waterways, and energy infrastructure are essential to America's economy, trade and vitality. I'm sure all of us here, as well as those senators on the EPW and ENR Committees, can agree that we can work together to craft legislation to improve our national infrastructure in order to reduce our ballooning national debt.

Thank you.

