

Opening Statement
The Honorable Adrian Smith (R-NE), Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation
Smart Grid Architecture and Standards: Assessing Coordination and Progress
U.S. House of Representatives
July 1, 2010

Thank you, Chairman Wu, for calling today's hearing to assess coordination and progress in the development of smart grid architecture and standards.

The Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 directed the National Institute of Standards and Technology to coordinate efforts to develop a common framework and interoperability standards for the implementation of smart grid technologies. This direction was both appropriate and necessary. Our electrical grid is an interconnected, cross border system, and NIST has proven expertise in developing such standards.

In my home state of Nebraska, proper implementation of smart grid technologies would not only allow connected consumers to better manage their consumption of energy, but could also encourage investment in small scale technologies to take advantage of available renewable energy resources for home use and selling it onto the grid. Nebraska ranks sixth among states in wind energy potential but lags behind in implementation because of difficulties in getting electricity onto the grid. Likewise, our many small streams and irrigation canals are a potential resource for small scale hydroelectric power.

I hope we can also address outstanding concerns with implementation, as well. One particular issue I am interested to learn more about is the affect of smart grid implementation on consumer privacy and choice.

On its face, using macro and micro consumer data to optimize the generation and distribution of electricity is a logical step we can take to improve the efficiency of our system. However, we should also know at what level of granularity this data will be gathered and used, and who will be using it. We should also ensure this data is used to enable smarter consumer decision-making, not to force false choices on consumers or to cut off access to electricity.

I also hope to learn what, if anything, is being done to ensure stimulus dollars dedicated to smart grid aren't being wasted on infrastructure which won't meet the forthcoming standards, since these standards have not yet been completed.

With that, thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for calling this hearing, and to our witnesses for your efforts to implement these standards and your presence here today. I look forward to a fruitful session and I yield back the balance of my time.