



**Senator Peter Welch  
Remarks as Delivered  
on Trump's National Energy Emergency**

**February 26, 2025**

You know, there's two issues. One is about the policy, the energy policy that the Trump Administration is announcing, and we can have a debate about that. I'm in full support of the comments that my colleagues have made. But there's another issue that, in many ways, is more important, and that issue is whether this United States Senate will accede to relinquishing its authority as a separate and independent branch of government to a president who tries to seize that power by claiming a phony emergency.

What justifies this action, as far as President Trump is concerned, and legally, is the assertion that we have an "energy emergency." And by invoking that term, he's saying to Congress: get lost. This needs immediate attention that only the executive can give. And "getting lost" means that we don't act as an independent branch of government and fulfill the constitutional responsibility we have to be separate, independent, and a check and balance on executive power.

That is a separate question from whether members agree or disagree with the "drill, baby, drill" policy, but it's fundamental to the well-being of our democracy. And Congress in the past has never come close to relinquishing that authority. And whether you're a Democrat or Republican, if you are a United States Senator, you have to defend the institution. Not because it's good for me or you, or any other member of the Senate, but it's good for America. We rely on that system of checks and balances.

So, the question is, is it an emergency? And as my colleagues have laid out, no. We've never had more production of power in our history. We're exporting power. The power situation is not an emergency. There's power abundance. Now, second thing, as many of my colleagues have said, there are real consequences. Because essentially what the president is doing is going all in on fossil fuels and casting aside the opportunities that come—economic opportunities as well as cleaner climate opportunities with clean energy.

I'm not going to repeat all of the information provided by, starting with Senator Kaine, but it's true. And you know, selling out, as some of my colleagues say, to the

fossil fuel industry—the president was reported to have said “get me a billion”—what I don't understand is why you would kill jobs in the clean energy sector that is producing cheaper power and good jobs. There's no justification for an executive or a Members of Congress doing that.

The other final point is that we are having this bizarre debate about whether there's a climate situation caused by carbon emissions. Reality is, we all know it is happening. We're all victimized by these wild weather events. And there's only two explanations that explain the actions of the administration.

One is they just favor fossil fuels, no matter what. A lot of truth to that. The other is there's a lack of confidence on the administration about the capacity of the American people, the American innovators, the American entrepreneurs to take full advantage of solving the issue of climate change by building out clean energy by doing efficiency. That really, really works. And you know, a confident person, a confident country doesn't deny problems exist, they acknowledge them, face them squarely, and then solve them. And in the process of doing that, they all end up better and you have a stronger economy as well.

So, there is no emergency. We must stand first for the separation of powers and the authority of Congress and not allow us to be stripped of that by an executive. And second, we have to have a wise policy that is going to create jobs to be sustainable for our economy and for our future.

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