

Statement of Rep. Ben Ray Lujan
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Full Committee Markup
February 5, 2013

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the inclusion of “management and operations issues at the Department of Energy” within the Committee’s Oversight Plan for the 113th Congress.

As Los Alamos National Laboratory is located in my district in Northern New Mexico, I am particularly interested in the national labs and the tremendous service they provide to the nation. These labs are the home of cutting edge science and research that have the potential to provide a new engine for our economy. I am the co-chair of the Science and National Labs Caucus here in the House and also the founder and co-chair of the Technology Transfer Caucus. Technology transfer has been an authorized activity of all federal labs since 1980; however, the importance and intensity of this activity has changed tremendously over the past 30 years. The EPAct of 2005 created a Technology Transfer Commercialization Fund as well as a Technology Transfer Coordinator position within the Department of Energy. I think it would be appropriate and helpful for this Committee to look at the current state of tech transfer activities and how they can be developed to more effectively support the economic vitality and competitiveness of the nation.

The National Nuclear Security Administration laboratories, which include LANL as well as Sandia National Laboratories and Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, provide a vital service to the nation, but the management of NNSA has been called into question by outside experts and Members of the House and Senate. I successfully added an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act for the current fiscal year that would study the feasibility of a multi-agency ownership model that would allow all federal national security agencies additional access to the labs’ resources and capabilities. Broadening these labs’ missions would be beneficial to our nation and it is imperative that this Committee undertake oversight to ensure that the NNSA is in full compliance with the new requirements of the FY13 NDAA.

Finally, I support the Ranking Member’s efforts to direct the Committee to hold hearings and oversight regarding the growing threat of global climate change. A consensus has emerged among the scientific community that our climate has been warming and we have already begun to experience the effects of these changes. As forest fires and droughts rage across my home state, it is clear to me that Congress must do more to develop a response to climate change’s effects. I urge the Chairman to direct this Committee to conduct extensive oversight into the causes and science of climate change.

I look forward to working on these issues as a new member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee and of the Committee as a whole.