

**Opening Statement of the Honorable Robert E. Latta  
Subcommittee on Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection  
“Disrupter Series: Advanced Materials and Production”  
March 15, 2017**

Good afternoon and welcome to the first hearing of the Disrupter Series in the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress. I would like to thank all of the witnesses for their flexibility with time change given all of the weather challenges over the last two days. The continuation of the Disrupter Series ensures that the Digital Commerce and Consumer Protection Subcommittee continues to learn about the cutting-edge developments across industries. I am excited to continue this series as Chairman and I look forward to more hearings, including tomorrow’s hearing on Smart Communities.

Today we are focused on advanced materials and production methods. The panel of witnesses are experts in a number of different fields from graphene and other nanoparticles to bio-ink and techniques to 3-D print human tissue. We also have experts in new materials and fabrication methods developing plastics, metals, and composite materials. The potential for each of these materials, and even those that

may not be represented on the panel today, are subject to the health of the U.S. economy and the willingness of public and private investors to take on some amount of risk.

The applications for these materials is seemingly endless: infrastructure, energy, telecommunications, automobiles, health care, aerospace, transportation, and more. The path to future applications, and investment in early stage development, can be uncertain given immediate capital investment requirements. However, on the other end of the equation is the potential for improved safety and long-term cost savings. There should be a full vetting of the costs and benefits as we examine potential use cases for advanced materials.

Moreover, if we are serious about improving safety, bringing consumers more and better options and ensuring manufacturing jobs here in America then we must be leaders in the development and application of these materials.

Basic research and development of new materials often is a result of an accidental discovery or an unexpected result. There is a tumultuous path for many materials from discovery to commercialization. U.S. job growth in materials science and engineering is dependent on the health of individual industries over the next 5-10 years.

I look forward to hearing from the witnesses' about their experiences along this development chain and how the government—at any level—is either helping or hindering further development of U.S. innovation in materials science and advanced production methods.