



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

Energy Subcommittee Ranking Member Randy Weber
Full Committee Hearing Statement
“Oversight of the Department of Energy’s Research and
Development Enterprise”
June 25, 2019

Thank you, Chairwoman Johnson, for hosting this hearing and a big Texas welcome to our fellow statesman, Secretary Rick Perry.

As we’ve heard from the Chairwoman, the Department of Energy and Secretary Perry have proposed a budget that requests cuts to programs that have traditionally received bipartisan support from this Committee.

I’d like to remind my colleagues on both sides of the aisle of two important facts. Number one, the budget proposal is just that; a proposal. We, the Members of Congress, are the ones tasked with actually setting the funding levels after hearing from important witnesses, like Secretary Perry today.

Second, I want to stress that we will have tough decisions to make on the DOE budget. We don’t have unlimited funds, and we can’t fund every project, no matter how worthy. Critical programs must be prioritized, and we have to make smart, targeted investments that give the American taxpayer the best bang for their buck year after year.

And at the Department of Energy, there is an incredible range of programs for us to review. This Committee’s jurisdiction includes all of DOE’s civilian research, including over \$10 billion in research, development, demonstration, and commercial application programs, as well as the Department’s 17 national labs. This amount totals one-third of the DOE’s budget.

Mr. Secretary, I don’t have to tell you that you lead an incredible Department, with a long history of major research achievements.

Over the past 70 years, research conducted at DOE’s national labs has led to monumental achievements in medicine, manufacturing, computing, as well as the development of innovative

energy technology. Each national lab has made invaluable contributions to U.S. scientific progress. And they have repeatedly demonstrated that basic science research is the most effective way to encourage innovation.

Additionally, DOE's 26 user facilities provide our nation's researchers with the most cutting-edge tools of modern science, like advanced light sources, particle accelerators, and the two fastest supercomputers in the world. Each year, approximately 22,000 researchers from academia and the private sector use DOE facilities to perform new scientific research and develop new technologies.

Here at home, DOE heads most federally-sponsored research in the physical sciences. Internationally, the United States, through the Department's work, is the world leader in basic science research and technological development.

But other countries, like China, are making significant investments in basic research, threatening America's global standing as the leader in scientific knowledge. Without the Department's continued investment in basic and early-stage research, the U.S. will lose its global technology edge.

By investing wisely in this research, the Department can achieve its goal of scientific discovery and technological breakthroughs for future generations. DOE must also invest in the research infrastructure that brings the best scientists in the world to the U.S.

I look forward to hearing from Secretary Perry about DOE's implementation of several key pieces of bipartisan Science Committee legislation that was signed into law last Congress – including the DOE Research and Innovation Act, the National Quantum Initiative Act, and my bill, the Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act.

DOE must prioritize the kind of ground-breaking basic research authorized in these bills over grants for technology that is ready for commercial deployment. When the government tries to push developed technology into the market, it wastes limited resources in competition with private investors.

But when basic research is the priority and target of federal support, everyone has the opportunity to access the fundamental knowledge that can lead to the development of future technologies.

Thank you again Secretary Perry for taking the time to be here today and I yield the balance of my time, Madam Chair.