



Opening Statement of Chairman Frank Lucas

Full Committee Markup
H.R. 2980, H.R. 2988, and H.R. 3559

June 14, 2023

Thank you all for joining us at this markup.

We have three important bills up for consideration today. First up are two bills that will authorize critical research partnerships at the Department of Energy.

We held a hearing in March to discuss how to leverage DOE's tremendous ability to address research challenges faced by other federal agencies.

DOE is home to 17 national laboratories that lead the world in research and development work. They also operate 28 user facilities, which give scientists access to cutting edge equipment and computing power.

These resources make DOE uniquely positioned to perform complex and cross-cutting research.

This Committee has already passed two DOE partnership bills – one with NOAA and another with USDA.

Today we'll consider bills to enhance DOE's partnerships with NASA and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

H.R. 2988, the DOE and NASA Interagency Research Coordination Act, will improve interagency coordination between the Department of Energy and NASA.

These agencies have a long history of collaboration – one which powers rovers on Mars and has fueled the Voyager spacecraft since 1977.

DOE and NASA are doing exciting work on nuclear energy, which will be critical to our ability to establish a long-term human presence on the Moon.

The results of this work on nuclear technology can be used here on Earth too, helping us to improve this clean and reliable energy source.

Today's bill will codify this partnership and ensure DOE and NASA can continue to collaborate on this groundbreaking research.

I'd like to thank our Energy Subcommittee Chairman Brandon Williams for sponsoring this bill, and Space and Aeronautics Subcommittee Ranking Member Eric Sorensen for cosponsoring it.

Next up we have H.R. 2980, the DOE-NSF Interagency Research Act. This bill supports DOE's longstanding partnership with the National Science Foundation, which allows the two agencies to tackle a wide range of complex research challenges.

Time and again this Committee has heard the importance of staying ahead of our adversaries like the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on innovative technologies like artificial intelligence, quantum information sciences, and advanced manufacturing.

This bill helps us do just that. By authorizing this collaboration, we're ensuring that we're making the best use of our investments in these advanced technologies.

I'd like to thank our Research & Technology Subcommittee Ranking Member Haley Stevens for sponsoring this and Rep. Jim Baird for cosponsoring it.

The last bill we'll consider today is particularly timely given the action on the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization this week.

Sometimes this fact might get overlooked, but the Science Committee has jurisdiction over a wide range of FAA's research and development activities. Traditionally, the R&D bill we pass out of this committee informs the broader FAA Reauthorization process. I expect that to be the case again this year.

When we held our legislative hearing on this topic in March, we heard about FAA's work to develop technologies that make air travel cleaner, more efficient, and safer. And we learned what we, as policy makers, can do to support that work and provide forward-looking direction.

This bill reflects the input we got at that hearing, as well as industry and stakeholder feedback. It's the product of extensive bipartisan negotiations to find a consensus that promotes innovation while prioritizing safety.

The result is a comprehensive bill to modernize and improve American aviation.

It quite literally supports aviation from the ground up, beginning with the durability of our runways and the identification of ground hazards at airfields.

It accelerates the development of advanced materials for aerospace vehicle construction, and supports research into cleaner aviation fuels, including hydrogen and alternatives to leaded gasoline.

It directs FAA to research better air traffic control systems, including how we monitor traffic over oceans and remote areas.

It addresses one of my favorite topics – weather forecasting – and how we can more accurately detect and predict weather to reduce delays and increase safety.

And, importantly, it ensures that safety continues to be the primary focus of FAA research and development, by requiring a report on whether at least 70% of FAA's R&D funds are going towards improving safety.

I believe we've put together a solid framework to support FAA's research work—one that is appropriately tailored to FAA's jurisdiction and strengths.

I am confident that this will be a valuable contribution to the overall FAA authorization.

With that, I yield to the Gentlewoman from California for her opening remarks.