



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Full Committee Markup of:

H.R. 9671, the Department of Energy Artificial Intelligence Act of 2024

H.R. 9710, the Small Modular Reactor Demonstration Act of 2024

H.R. 9720, the AI Incident Reporting and Security Enhancement Act

H.R. 9723, the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2024

September 25, 2024

Thank you, Chairman Lucas. Today we have a diverse selection of bipartisan bills. Some continue the last markup's focus on Artificial Intelligence, while others are concerned with nuclear energy and windstorms.

The first bill on the roster is the AI Incident Reporting and Security Enhancement Act. This bill is sponsored by Representatives Ross, Obernolte, and Science Committee member emeritus, Don Beyer. The National Institute of Standards and Technology is often said to be the most important agency few have heard of. In the area of cybersecurity, it's importance cannot be overstated. NIST operates the National Vulnerability Database which serves as a repository for IT cybersecurity vulnerability standards. The bill before us today directs NIST to use the same vulnerability management processes to account for AI vulnerabilities. Moreover, it also directs NIST to work with the Department of Homeland Security in order to convene a multistakeholder process to support voluntary collection, reporting and tracking of substantial AI-related security and safety incidents. This is a very resourceful bill that blends the established capabilities of NIST with the evolving demand of an AI economy, I am excited that it will be considered today.

Our next bill is the "Small Modular Reactor Demonstration Act of 2024", sponsored by Mr. Strong and Ms. Ross. At a time when energy demands have surged due to the growth of data centers and the electrification of the transportation sector, we must ensure this new economic growth is supported by clean power generation. We are in an era of domestic nuclear innovation focused on increased safety, flexibility, and environmental consideration. Small modular reactors and micro reactors are miniaturized nuclear reactors. While a conventional nuclear reactor produces 1000 megawatts of electricity, enough power about 100,000 homes, these smaller reactors are a fraction of the size and average about 100 to 300 megawatts of electricity production.

These reactors can be coupled with renewables, built in remote communities that might otherwise rely on diesel generators, and require a fraction of the investment of a conventional nuclear reactor. That last point is of particular importance as the required capital for the construction of a conventional reactor makes new construction prohibitively difficult. H.R. 9710, gives direction and guidance to a DOE program, already established through the 2024

Consolidated Appropriations Act. It would empower research on small modular reactors and micro-reactors and create demonstration projects for this technology. I believe this is a bill we can all get behind and support.

Moving on to the next bill on the roster, The Department of Energy Artificial Intelligence Act of 2024, which is sponsored by Representatives Williams and Bonamici. AI is transforming how we innovate, grow our economy, and protect our nation. However, certain strategic areas of the US government's artificial intelligence capabilities currently lag industry. Meanwhile foreign adversaries are investing in AI at scale. Without leadership in this field, the United States stands to lose its competitive scientific edge and ability to maintain our national and economic security. We face a very competitive AI innovation landscape, and unless we take proper measures, we could lose our nation's ability to attract and train a talented AI workforce. This bill would provide updated guidance for DOE's activities in developing advanced artificial intelligence systems to carry out its pressing national security, energy, and scientific discovery missions.

Our last bill of the day is the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2024, sponsored by Mr. Miller and another Science Committee member emeritus, Mr. Foster. Even though this year is not quite over, it has been a remarkable one for windstorm damage. In the U.S. there have been 15 windstorm events together causing over \$1 billion in losses, including 4 tornado outbreaks, and Hurricane Beryl, which has the terrifying distinction of being the earliest-forming Category 5 hurricane on record. The National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program is a NIST led interagency program that focuses on windstorm hazards research and preparedness. NWIRP was first created in 2004 and last reauthorized in 2015, with authorization lapsing after FY17. This 7-year gap in authorizations has led to organizational and prioritization problems amongst NWIRP agencies. Moreover, that gap has made us more vulnerable to disaster. This reauthorization bill, accounts for this gap and will make some much-needed policy changes in the program including closer collaboration with social scientists, research on wind-driven fire - like those that caused the tragic Maui fire of 2023 - and the study of the effects of climate change on windstorm behavior.

These are all good bipartisan bills, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting them. I want to thank the sponsors of these bills for their good work, and I yield back the balance of my time.