



Opening Statement of Chairman Frank Lucas

Full Committee Markup

H.R. 9720, H.R. 9710, H.R. 9671, and H.R. 9723

September 25, 2024

Good morning. Thank you for joining us today at this markup of two energy bills and two research and technology bills.

We've had a productive September, and I'm pleased to consider another four bills today to wrap up the month and continue advancing our legislative agenda.

The first bill we will consider is H.R. 9720, the AI Incident Reporting and Security Enhancement Act, led by Reps. Ross, Obernolte, and Beyer.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) plays a crucial role in developing standards, best practices, testing, and metrics for cybersecurity and AI-related issues.

Among this critical work is the National Vulnerability Database, which industries worldwide rely on to help remove vulnerabilities from IT systems.

This bill directs NIST to update the database to reflect vulnerabilities to AI systems and study AI-related security and safety incidents.

These changes will enable NIST to update its knowledge base, engage with the latest developments in AI and cyber-related challenges, and provide comprehensive guidance to ensure its standards remain relevant and effective for all stakeholders.

Moving on, our next bill is H.R. 9710, the Small Modular Reactor Demonstration Act.

Innovative energy solutions, like small modular reactors (SMRs), have the potential to bolster American energy production while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

SMRs have reduced footprints, are more cost-effective, and are designed more simply, leading to improved safety and operational efficiency.

This bill supports the advancement of ongoing SMR projects and encourages collaboration between the National Labs, industry, and academia to drive forward small reactor technologies for use domestically and internationally.

I want to thank Science Committee members Reps. Strong and Ross, as well as Rep. Aderholt, for their leadership in developing this legislation.

I look forward to seeing the progress and implementation of DOE initiatives in this crucial energy sector.

Next on the agenda is another energy bill contributing to the Department of Energy's important work.

H.R. 9671, the Department of Energy Artificial Intelligence Act, is sponsored by our Energy Subcommittee Chairman Brandon Williams along with Representative Bonamici and provides updated guidance for DOE's development of artificial intelligence systems.

As we have frequently discussed in this committee, AI is reshaping the world, and altering how we live our daily lives.

To maintain our leadership in this industry and stay competitive globally, we must facilitate growth and enhance our competitive edge by leveraging the resources and expertise of our world-class federal facilities.

This bill modifies the National Artificial Intelligence Initiative Act of 2020 and codifies ongoing activities at DOE and its 17 National Laboratories to continue developing integrated scientific AI systems to carry out critical missions.

As DOE already possesses high-performance computing, cross-cutting research, and best-in-class data systems, it is only fitting that we utilize these tools to continue supporting the advancement of artificial intelligence.

This work will help fuel innovation and strengthen our competitive edge in this field.

Lastly, our final bill today is H.R. 9723, the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program Reauthorization Act of 2024.

We Oklahomans know all too well the devastation caused by severe windstorms, especially since we are part of tornado alley.

This bill provides crucial funding for the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program, or "NWIRP," which conducts vital research on mitigating injuries and property damage from windstorms.

The bill also requires NWIRP to conduct extensive R&D to improve structures' resilience to destructive natural forces.

This research is essential for helping millions of people nationwide take proactive measures and be well-prepared when wind-related disasters occur.

I want to thank Rep. Miller and former Science Committee member Rep. Foster for partnering on this important bill. The last formal authorization for NWIRP expired in 2017, so this reauthorization is long overdue.

With that, I commend the bipartisan efforts on all these bills today, and I am confident that we will have a productive markup.