



## **Opening Statement of Chairman Brian Babin**

Full Committee Hearing

*Chemistry Competitiveness: Fueling Innovation and Streamlining Processes to Ensure Safety and Security*

January 8, 2026

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Good morning, and thank you to our witnesses for being with us today. Before I begin, I would like to offer our prayers, on behalf of the entire House Science, Space, and Technology Committee, to the LaMalfa family as they grieve the tragic loss of our good friend Doug, who, although not a Member of this Committee, served the American people proudly for many years.

We'll miss him greatly in this Chamber.

I would also like to extend our prayers to Congressman Jim Baird and his wife as they heal from a recent car accident. I was grateful to learn that Congressman Baird has already been released from the hospital and continue to pray for a similar speedy recovery of his wife. Congressman Baird is a dear friend and a valued member of this Committee, and we wish them both a swift and full recovery.

Now, please allow me to return to the topic of this hearing, which is to examine the current landscape of chemical research and development in the United States.

My hope is that this conversation will serve as a productive starting point as we consider policy improvements to strengthen the chemical R&D ecosystem and ensure the United States maintains its position as the global leader in innovation—including in chemical science.

Everything we rely on—building materials, household products, medical devices and pharmaceuticals, space exploration, energy, transportation, semiconductors, defense, and virtually all modern technology—depends on chemicals.

Yet developing new chemicals, or new applications for existing ones, is a long and resource-intensive process that can take well over a decade, sometimes closer to two. This reflects the complexity of chemical development, market approval, and risk evaluation.

Innovation in chemistry is critical to our way of life and to our ability as a nation to reach even greater heights.

Today's hearing will inform how we can advance research and development policies that promote domestic R&D, allowing companies to develop products right here in the United States. We must strengthen supply chains—especially when it comes to chemistries that can bolster our national security—which is something we should all be able to agree on.

Let me be clear: development must not come at the expense of human health or the environment, which the EPA has always kept at the forefront of its regulatory processes, and that has not changed. One thing we should all pay attention to is whether EPA is sufficiently staffed and funded to ensure the safe approval of new chemicals. According to a 2023 GAO Report, more than 90 percent of chemical reviews were beyond their statutorily required review times under the Toxic Substances Control Act. Because of Administrator Zeldin's decisive actions to reorganize the EPA, with science placed at the center of the Agency, we have already seen measurable results through the substantial reduction of the longstanding backlog of chemical reviews and risk notifications that accumulated during the Biden Administration.

Reducing regulatory uncertainty and ensuring timely approval of new, cleaner, and safer products is critical to keeping innovators engaged in developing solutions that sustain America's competitiveness.

We must create a domestic R&D environment that keeps pace with industry capabilities and promotes innovation right here in our communities. I am hopeful that today's discussion can help guide research and development policy at the EPA, especially as the Toxic Substances Control Act comes up for reauthorization later this year.

Enhancing U.S. leadership in chemical advancements—especially as bad actors like China and India are rapidly out-investing the United States in this space—will help ensure that end users can continue relying on products made in the United States because we know that domestic producers will keep our safety and national security in focus far beyond those in other countries.

I'm eager to get the conversation underway and look forward to identifying areas of agreement that keep America at the helm of safety and efficiency.