



Opening Statement of Chairman Scott Franklin

Environment Subcommittee Hearing
Advancing Environmental Protection Through Science and Technology
Thursday, June 4, 2026

Good morning and thank you to our witness for joining us. Today's hearing will examine the science and technology activities of the Environmental Protection Agency, which includes the newly formed Office of Applied Science and Environmental Solutions (OASES) [pronounced "oasis"], and its role in coordinating research across the Agency. Environmental challenges have grown more complex since the Agency was founded 56 years ago. To meet those challenges, the EPA must maintain a credible scientific foundation that supports effective decision-making.

Today's discussion will help us understand the research conducted at the Agency and how this new office advances EPA's mission by ensuring regulatory actions rely on trustworthy science, operational efficiency, and real-world results for the American people.

This Committee has a long history of oversight of EPA science, and we have jurisdiction over the implementation of the Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act (ERDDAA) [pronounced "Er-da"]. The Act directs EPA to maintain a long-term research and development program that can address future and emerging threats while also meeting its near-term regulatory responsibilities.

Under ERDDAA, this Committee oversees the EPA's Science Advisory Board (SAB), which conducts independent reviews of the scientific foundations of EPA's standards and regulations. I was pleased to see that the newly reconstituted SAB is comprised of a seasoned group of scientific professionals, and I expect their expertise to strengthen the Agency's work. As the EPA embeds scientific experts in program offices, it must continue to support robust peer-review processes and the longstanding commitment to scientific integrity.

With that context, we now turn to the creation of OASES ("oasis"), which was established in the Office of the Administrator to facilitate Agency-wide coordination. Over the last 56 years, our understanding of environmental conditions, exposure routes and health impacts, and the fate and transport of chemicals through different pathways has grown exponentially. This evolution requires an honest evaluation of how EPA conducts and applies scientific research to tackle today's environmental challenges. Concentrating scientific capabilities within a single research arm, as EPA previously did through the Office of Research and Development (ORD), often made it difficult for regulatory program offices to obtain the timely information and data needed to perform their duties. While ORD was highly regarded for the expertise of its scientists, the EPA has now embedded that scientific talent directly within the program offices that implement major environmental statutes, moving away from this siloed, often disconnected framework.

This shift is not only structural; it is strategic. When scientific experts work side-by-side with program staff, EPA can evaluate complex submissions more effectively, respond to emerging risks more quickly, and base regulatory decisions on the best available science. Embedding scientists and technical experts in program offices encourages earlier engagement, supports more efficient review processes, and improves communication about data and analytical needs. This approach limits duplication and allows the EPA to direct its research investments where they will have the greatest impact.

The EPA's mission relies on robust scientific capacity to safeguard human health, enhance energy independence, and support a strong domestic economy. That expertise helps the Agency evaluate new chemicals, clean up hazardous waste sites, and make informed decisions based on sound data.

However, it also raises a question that colleagues on both sides of the aisle have asked about the Agency reorganization: Does the EPA currently have the scientific staff and resources needed to make this new model work? As responsibilities shift to program offices, environmental challenges are increasingly data-intensive and technically complex. The EPA must avoid stretching its scientific workforce too thin, as maintaining scientific excellence requires adequate staffing and reliable resources.

My goal is to ensure the EPA has the support it needs to fulfill its mission and maintain the United States' position as a global leader in science and technology. A strong scientific workforce ensures that EPA's research remains responsive and innovative.

Today's hearing will help us identify ongoing research and development priorities and evaluate how OASES ("oasis") strengthens scientific work across the Agency, improves the timeliness of EPA decisions, and supports collaboration across program offices.

I look forward to hearing Dr. Gwinn's testimony and to our discussion. Thank you.