OPENING STATEMENT

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of the Subcommittee on Energy

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Energy
Subcommittee on Research & Technology
"Materials Science: Building the Future"
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Thank you, Chairman Weber and Chairwoman Comstock, for holding this hearing.
We have assembled an impressive panel today. Thank you all for being here. I will make my remarks brief so we can hear each of your testimonies.

As I'm sure you're aware, we'd be hard-pressed to find a scientific field that doesn't rely on materials science at some level to accomplish its research objectives. It's a critically important area of research for answering the most pressing scientific questions and advancing our economy in the 21st century. Lightweight vehicles, high-performance building materials, more efficient turbines, and solar panels are just a few examples. The research and development of new materials can provide a direct benefit to consumers with savings on energy bills and benefits to our environment.

Scientists at universities, national laboratories, and in the private industry, utilize federal research grants and scientific user facilities to explore the frontiers of materials research. A better understanding of the properties of ceramics, glass, metals, composites, polymers, and plastics is achieved through materials research. By optimizing these properties, we can address key hurdles in developing new technologies with a variety of applications. Energy efficiency and reliability, public health and safety, and environmental stewardship can all benefit from strong investments in material research. In fact, I think we could sit here and talk about the immense benefits of materials research all day. I assume we will spend a good part of this hearing doing just that.

While there seems to be strong support for this work in Congress, we cannot have this conversation without acknowledging the shortsighted and harmful Trump budget released last month. The Administration's budget would absolutely decimate the all-important field of materials science in the United States. The budget would cut sustainable transportation and renewable energy by 70% and energy efficiency by 80%. It would cut critical research on the electric grid and fossil fuels in half. It would eliminate The Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E), cut the Office of Science by 17%, and nuclear energy by 30%. All of these programs help fund the materials research that we will hear about today.

The Administration's budget proposal will make the United States less competitive. These proposed cuts are puzzling. I look forward to hearing from each of you on how the proposed budget cuts at DOE, NSF, and NIST could impact the materials research enterprise and U.S. competitiveness. I am particularly interested in hearing from Dr. Schwartz about the consequences these severe cuts could have at his laboratory, which has a special focus on materials research.

The Administration has claimed that the private sector would simply start funding these key research areas once the federal government cuts them from its budget. But this is not based in reality. In fact, Administration officials recently confirmed that have not even begun a conversation with the private sector to determine what industry would be able or willing to pick up. Let's get back to reality and continue our strong support for these high-value research programs that are vital for American competitiveness, our quality of life, and our scientific leadership.

Thank you again for testifying.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.