

OPENING STATEMENT
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of the Subcommittee on Environment

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Energy
Subcommittee on Environment
“The Future of Fossil: Energy Technologies Leading the Way”
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Our nation is facing a serious confluence of factors affecting our energy policy: a growing global demand for energy, a heavy reliance on fossil fuels, high energy prices, and climate change resulting from harmful emissions. In 2015, the Energy Information Administration found that fossil fuel usage accounted for nearly 82 percent of all energy consumption in the U.S. This was the lowest share in the previous 100 years, but still demonstrates our dependence on fossil fuels.

The dangers to our climate and environment from the carbon emissions generated from fossil fuel production and use have been studied and confirmed. It is more important than ever that we develop a comprehensive national energy policy that includes a greater emphasis on investing more, not less, in research and development programs to improve efficiency and reduce emissions to keep our air and water clean.

In Oregon, we are leading the nation to decrease our reliance on fossil fuels with our robust renewable energy portfolio of solar and wind resources. By focusing our investments on renewable resources, we not only protect our environment, but we also have the opportunity to support new industries, new jobs, and innovative small businesses that are developing clean energy technologies. During the transition, and for states not making similar commitments yet, fossil fuels must be used in a responsible way that mitigates environmental harm.

The Department of Energy’s Office of Fossil Energy supports research on ways to reduce the negative environmental effects of using and developing fossil energy resources. This includes improvements to the efficiencies of a wide range of fossil and non-fossil fueled power plants through the advancements of technologies such as super critical carbon dioxide power cycles. Much of this cutting-edge research is conducted at DOE laboratories, including the National Energy Technology Laboratory or NETL (*“nettle”*) located in Albany, Oregon. The lab is also advancing affordable carbon capture technologies that reduce emissions and use captured carbon dioxide to increase domestic oil production from depleted oil fields.

Despite these innovative efforts at the Department of Energy, this Administration has sent inconsistent messages about fossil energy technologies. President Trump has highlighted the need for “clean coal,” and has worked to bolster fossil industries, but has simultaneously attempted to slash funding for the critical federal research supported by the Office of Fossil Energy in his Fiscal Year 2019 budget request.

As a result of strong collaborative efforts between federal and non-federal partners, the U.S. is considered a leader in the development of various innovative fossil energy technologies, such as carbon capture and storage. Underfunding these activities could ultimately cede American leadership in the rapidly developing low carbon economy.

As members of the Science Committee, we should be encouraging the Department of Energy to continue supporting unparalleled research into environmental mitigation strategies for fossil fuels that would otherwise not be pursued by the private sector.

Until we regulate carbon emissions in the U.S. to drive innovation in the private sector, government-sponsored research is critical to fill the gaps in the market. Through these investments, there is tremendous opportunity for the U.S. to promote a healthier environment and become a leading exporter, rather than an importer, of the next generation of fossil energy technologies.

I am pleased to see a well-rounded witness panel today to discuss the successful partnerships between federal, state, and private sector researchers in this field. I look forward to learning more about current technologies used to mitigate the environmental effects associated with the production and use of fossil fuels, and the innovations that can support a new national energy policy.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.