



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON **SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Subcommittee on Energy Hearing:

Igniting America's Energy Future: The Promise and Progress of Fusion Power

September 18, 2025

Good morning and thank you, Chairman Weber and Ranking Member Ross, for holding this very important hearing today. And thank you to this excellent panel of witnesses for being here this morning as well.

It is not exactly news around here that I am an enthusiastic supporter of fusion energy R&D. That said, there have been some significant developments since this Committee last held a hearing on fusion about two years ago.

The National Ignition Facility at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory – still the only machine in the world to achieve fusion ignition – has now achieved it 9 times, with a big new record output of 8.6 megajoules reached in April.

Last year, the Department of Energy finalized agreements with the first 8 awardees of its milestone-based public-private partnership program. And DOE has made real strides over the last several months in pivoting its activities to better follow the recommendations of the fusion community in its most recent Long Range Plan, which was led by Dr. Carter.

Meanwhile, the global fusion industry has raised about \$3.5 billion in private investment in the last 15 months alone, with the bulk of this money provided to companies that are currently headquartered in the U.S.

On the other hand, in an analysis released just this week, the Special Competitive Studies Project found that China has spent at least \$6.5 billion on fusion commercialization efforts since 2023. I look forward to hearing from Dr. Regan and Dr. Mumgaard about this latest surge in investments at home and abroad – and what we in the public sector should really be doing to ensure U.S. leadership in this potentially transformational industry.

Now, I remain strongly opposed to the President's Budget Request overall, and the absolutely devastating impacts it would have on our nation's research enterprise if it were ever enacted. But I can walk and chew gum at the same time, and when it comes to the specific request for fusion – while far more resources are certainly warranted – I believe that the Administration got it about right within the total funding for fusion that is being proposed.

This is why I introduced a bipartisan amendment to the Energy & Water Appropriations bill with Chairman Obernolte and my colleagues Mr. Beyer and Ms. Trahan. The amendment simply aimed to ensure that these important shifts proposed by the President to better support key commercialization-focused activities are fully funded, including a larger focus on fusion materials, fuel cycle R&D, and public-private partnerships. Unfortunately, for some reason the Majority on the Rules Committee did not choose to make this amendment to support President Trump's Budget Request for fusion in order, so it never got a vote. But I will continue to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle in the House and the Senate to make progress on this wherever I can.

Lastly, I'd like to again thank my colleague, Chairman Obernolte for joining me last month in introducing H.R. 4999, the bipartisan STEM Education and Skilled Technical Workforce for Fusion Act, to ensure that we are addressing the broad range of workforce needs for a growing, U.S.-based fusion industry. I'll look forward to discussing this topic in more detail with Dr. Diem and our other witnesses as well, as this is truly a crosscutting issue for you all.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I am excited to hear from our panel and I yield back.