



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

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Full Committee Markup of:

H.R. 2225, the “National Science Foundation for the Future Act”

H.R. 3593, the “Department of Energy Science for the Future Act”

Tuesday, June 15, 2021

Good morning, and welcome to today’s markup of H.R. 2225, the National Science Foundation for the Future Act and HR 3593, the Department of Energy Science for the Future Act.

America has always been a driving force of innovation. And that innovation has been the most important engine of our economic growth for at least the past 100 years. However, our international competitors have taken note of our success. And those competitors are making huge bets on science and technology investments in the hopes that they will see the same fruits of innovation that we have seen. If we are to remain the world leader in science and technology, we need to act now.

But we shouldn’t act rashly. Instead of trying to copy the efforts of our emerging competitors, we should be doubling down on the proven innovation engines we have at the National Science Foundation and the Department of Energy. The bills before us today do just that.

The race to be the best at science and technology is a race to have good high-paying jobs. And I want to be clear – I’m not just talking about scientists and computer programmers. I’m also talking about the electricians and pipefitters who help to build our research and computing centers. I’m talking about the technicians and custodial staff that help maintain these facilities. I’m talking about the factory workers manufacturing the next generation of green technologies right here in America. That’s what is at stake when we consider these bills today.

The first bill we will be considering today is the NSF for the Future Act. It is the first comprehensive reauthorization of NSF in more than 10 years. This legislation puts NSF on a sustainable, 5-year doubling path. It strategically builds on NSF’s existing strengths, while also pushing the agency in bold new directions. It represents a significant step forward in building more regional and institutional diversity in our academic research enterprise. And it addresses our STEM pipeline at all levels.

I am very proud of where this bill is today. It includes many good ideas from Members on both sides of the aisle. It also reflects input from the most diverse group of stakeholders this Committee has ever consulted. We have dozens of letters of support from organizations representing all fields of science and engineering. Thousands of individual scientists have publicly voiced their support. Countless thought leaders, universities, and former government leaders have told us how much they support this bill. This is reflected in the strongly worded endorsements we have received from groups like the Association of American Universities and the American Chemical Society.

We will also consider the DOE Science for the Future Act. The Department of Energy's Office of Science is the nation's premier federal agency that supports research in the physical sciences for energy applications. And the bill we are considering today will ensure that the Office of Science remains the world leader in these pursuits for years to come.

Consideration of this bill could not come at a more critical juncture as the world forges a clean energy future, so that America can reap the rewards of that transition. This bipartisan bill would be the first comprehensive authorization of this crucial office that supports over half of DOE's non-defense R&D budget. H.R. 3593 authorizes significant, steady, and sustainable growth for the Office of Science. The bill ensures the Office's construction projects and upgrades to its user facilities have the resources they need to be completed on-time and on-budget. That's why the bill has been endorsed by stakeholders in the business community, like the U.S. Chamber of Commerce; the academic community, like the University of Texas; and the scientific community, like the American Physical Society. Without objection, I'll place into the record the full list of endorsing organizations for both bills.

The bills before us today are the result of a collaborative bipartisan approach. Before I yield back, I want to recognize the efforts of Ranking Member Lucas and his staff in helping us to get to where we are today. I feel strongly that the legislation we are considering today represents the best of this Committee, and it would not have been possible without the strong collaboration by Ranking Member Lucas.

I look forward to a productive markup, and to getting these bills to the floor so we can send them to the Senate.