



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

## Opening Statement

**Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**

Full Committee Markup of:

H.R. 4521, the “Bioeconomy Research and Development Act of 2021”

H.R. 847, the “Promoting Digital Privacy Technologies Act”

H.R. 4270, the “Abandoned Well Remediation Research and Development Act”

H.R. 4819, the “National Nuclear University Research Infrastructure Reinvestment Act of 2021”

H.R. 6291, the “Microelectronics Research for Energy Innovation Act” or “Micro Act”

January 19, 2022

Welcome to the first Science Committee markup of 2022. Today we are marking up five good bipartisan bills.

The first bill to be considered is the Bioeconomy Research and Development Act. I first want to thank Ranking Member Lucas for partnering with me on this bill. This legislation creates a national engineering biology initiative in support of U.S. leadership in the 21st Century Bioeconomy.

Advances in engineering biology will drive innovation across nearly all sectors of our economy. Europe and China long ago took steps to implement a bioeconomy strategy. Our own efforts have progressed in fits and starts. The time to implement a coherent national strategy is now. I’ll speak more about this bill when we call it up.

The next item we will take up today is the Promoting Digital Privacy Technologies Act. I want to thank Representatives Stevens and Gonzalez for their thoughtful work on this legislation. Privacy enhancing technologies have the potential to vastly improve the way we protect peoples’ privacy when processing information about them. This bill seeks to accelerate the development of these technologies. It would fund research into privacy enhancing technologies at the National Science Foundation. It would also authorize outreach and standard-setting activities at the National Institute of Standards and Technology. Finally, the bill promotes coordination on the development of these technologies across the Federal government. Getting privacy right in a way that allows for the effective use of information is a difficult challenge. This bill will promote new avenues of research to strike that balance.

I am happy to be an original cosponsor, along with Ranking Member Lucas, on the next bill we are marking up: the Abandoned Well Remediation Research and Development Act, introduced by Mr. Lamb and Ms. Bice. This bipartisan bill creates a research, development, and

demonstration program at the Department of Energy to tackle the ever-growing problem of abandoned oil and gas wells in the U.S. It would increase the efficiency of remediation, mitigate environmental harms, and reduce methane emissions. It would also improve technologies to enable the widespread mapping of unrecorded abandoned wells around the country, some of which can date back as far as the 1850s. As we transition to a clean energy economy, it is critical that we have sound and proven technologies to mitigate the harmful methane emissions of hundreds of thousands, if not millions of abandoned wells in our communities.

The next bill we will consider is the National Nuclear University Research Infrastructure Reinvestment Act of 2021, introduced by Representatives Gonzalez, Foster, Casten, and Meijer. This bill builds off historic nuclear energy research and development legislation enacted into law as part of the Energy Act of 2020.

The bill has two major thrusts – first, to ensure existing nuclear energy university infrastructure is well-maintained and potentially upgraded; and second, to build new nuclear science and engineering university facilities. And the bill also places strong emphasis on ensuring all activities include a wide variety of participants beyond those who already have established nuclear science capabilities, including historically Black colleges and universities, Tribal colleges or universities, and other minority-serving institutions.

Finally, the last bill we will consider to today is the Microelectronics Research for Energy Innovation Act, which was sponsored by Representatives Tonko and Ellzey. This legislation seeks to leverage the unique capabilities and technical expertise of the Department of Energy to accelerate transformational advancements in the field of microelectronics, which play an increasingly significant role in our daily lives, and which are essential to maintaining U.S. national security and global economic and scientific leadership. Specifically, this bill would direct the Secretary of Energy to carry out a crosscutting initiative in microelectronics, including research activities aimed at driving progress in related scientific fields as well as large-scale, center-based efforts focused on addressing specific challenges. The bill also includes an emphasis on workforce development, education, and outreach to ensure that we are engaging students of all ages in this exciting field and laying the groundwork for the microelectronics workforce of the future. I urge my colleagues to support this important legislation.

Finally, I want to address a topic that came up very late in the process. Groups approached us yesterday afternoon asking to add in Davis Bacon prevailing wage requirements to three of the bills we are marking up today. This was much too late in the process to try and deal with this issue. While I am a supporter of Davis Bacon, some of my friends on the other side of the aisle are not. Trying to address this issue while maintaining strong bipartisan support is something that simply could not be done in a hasty fashion.

I know the gentleman from New Jersey is a strong advocate for Davis Bacon, and I would like to try and find a path forward on this issue as we move forward. However, I don't want to sugar coat how difficult addressing this issue will be while maintaining bipartisan support for the legislation.