



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

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Joint Investigations & Oversight and Energy Subcommittee Hearing:
Management and Spending Challenges within the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Wednesday, February 5, 2020

Good morning and thank you, Chairman Foster and Chairwoman Fletcher, for holding this joint hearing on oversight of the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy—also known as EERE.

EERE leads the Department's efforts in developing and delivering affordable energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions, aiming to help transform the world's energy system and respond to the global challenge of climate change.

According to EERE, its investments of \$12 billion in taxpayer dollars toward clean energy research and development has yielded an estimated net economic benefit to the United States of more than \$230 billion, with an overall annual return on investment of more than 20%. I am pleased to hear this, given that this Committee has jurisdiction over the Department's vitally important science and energy R&D activities, laboratories, and facilities.

That being said, we still have significant investments we need to make to continue to innovate on energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies, further bringing down their costs and making them even more beneficial for Americans. We have only begun to touch the surface of what these technologies can do, and our national labs, universities, and industry partners possess the expertise to explore them to their fullest potential.

That's why this hearing is so important. I am disappointed to hear that EERE has been unable to move hundreds of millions of dollars in grant funding out the door, and to my knowledge, has even cancelled some of that grant funding days before award finalists were to be announced. This does not sound like the type of support our nation's scientists, engineers, entrepreneurs, and industry leaders can rely on. If the United States is to become a global leader in clean energy, EERE needs to be sufficiently and responsibly funding R&D in these areas.

Beyond funding, it will take the coordinated work of EERE employees and our stakeholders to turn that vision into a reality. I join my colleagues in the House and Senate Appropriations Committees in their bipartisan concerns over EERE's staffing levels, which have reached new

laws. We should be doing everything we can to ensure that EERE has the staff it needs to administer and oversee federally funded research as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Constituents from Member districts on both sides of the aisle benefit greatly from this research, and we believe it is our duty to ensure the responsible use of their tax dollars. When it comes to these issues, this Committee has consistently demonstrated healthy, bipartisan collaboration. I've been appreciative of the many substantial energy research bills that we have advanced in this Congress with our colleagues across the aisle.

I am glad that Assistant Secretary Simmons could join us today and look forward to a productive discussion with our distinguished witnesses to learn more about how we can help with these management and spending challenges. We can all agree—we are here to support EERE in its efforts to enhance U.S. energy productivity and our national competitiveness.

Thank you, and I yield back.