



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

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Subcommittee on Energy Hearing:

*The Department of Energy's Office of Science: Exploring the Next Frontiers in
Energy Research and Scientific Discovery*

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

Thank you Chairwoman Fletcher for holding this hearing today, and I would also like to thank Dr. Fall for being here.

The Department of Energy's Office of Science is actually the largest supporter of research in the physical sciences in the country, and it operates more than 30 national scientific user facilities whose applications go well beyond energy innovation. Our nation's top researchers from industry, academia, and other federal agencies use these facilities to examine everything from new materials that will better meet our military's needs, to new pharmaceuticals that will better treat disease, to even examining the fundamental building blocks of the universe. I believe that this stewardship of unique scientific research, including the nation's major national user facilities, is an important role that I hope the Department will continue to make one of its highest priorities.

Now, while this Office supports many critical research programs and facilities, I would like to take this opportunity to briefly talk about your role in fostering fusion energy research and, specifically, the ITER international fusion project. I was pleased that back in 2018, the President signed into law the Department of Energy Research and Innovation Act, which I was proud to sponsor with the Committee's Chairman at the time, Mr. Smith. That law requires the Office of Science Director to, among other things, establish an innovative concepts program as well as an inertial fusion energy program to further pursue breakthrough ideas that, thus far, had no real home in the Department's research portfolio. I hope that you are already taking steps to finally address this important legislative direction as soon as possible.

I am also quite happy that the President just signed into law a substantial increase in support for the ITER international fusion project, which I and Ranking Member Lucas strongly advocated for. It is crucial that we honor our commitment to this project, and ensure that we are providing the funds that the Department of Energy itself determined would be necessary to maintain its construction schedule and minimize its total cost to U.S. taxpayers. The completion and operation of ITER will make major contributions to what we know of fusion energy today. And

if successful, this project could be a huge game changer in the energy future of not only our nation, but for humanity as a whole. I hope that the Department's next budget request finally reflects the support that this project requires and certainly deserves.

Thank you, and with that I yield back the balance of my time.