



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

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Energy Subcommittee Hearing:

Fostering a New Era of Fusion Energy Research and Technology Development

Wednesday, November 17, 2021

Good morning and thank you, Chairman Bowman, for holding this hearing on fusion energy activities carried out by the Department of Energy. There are many of us on the Science, Space, and Technology Committee on both sides of the aisle that strongly believe that the promise of fusion energy is worth pursuing, and for that matter, warrants far greater support than the federal government has provided to date.

Fusion has the potential to deliver clean, abundant energy to the world, all while producing essentially no greenhouse gas emissions. I have previously noted that a breakthrough in fusion energy research would be a major step in enabling our clean energy future. And in fact, there have been a couple of significant breakthroughs within the last few months, so I am pleased that we have witnesses here today who will discuss those in detail. And though there is still more work that needs to be done, the policy decisions and research investments we make now could well enable the next key advancements to come much sooner.

Fusion energy research has had longstanding support from the Science Committee. I am proud to say that over the past few years, this Committee has advanced numerous bills that provide significant direction for fusion research activities supported by the Department of Energy. These include substantial provisions in the Department of Energy Research and Innovation Act as well as the Energy Act of 2020, both of which were signed into law.

In June, the House passed the Department of Energy Science for the Future Act, a bill that I lead with Ranking Member Lucas and both Chairman Bowman and Ranking Member Weber of the Energy Subcommittee. This bill would expand upon previously authorized fusion energy activities, including strong authorization of appropriations for these programs. It includes full support for U.S. participation in the ITER international fusion project. And I would be remiss if I did not note that this Committee included \$1.24 billion in total funding for fusion energy R&D and \$1.6 billion in total support for fusion facility construction and equipment in the text that it advanced for the Build Back Better Act.

I was also pleased to see the recent reports released by both the Fusion Energy Sciences Advisory Committee and the National Academies. These reports outline strategic investments

needed to enable a robust national fusion research program, including steps required to develop a pilot plant for fusion energy.

Despite all of this progress made by Congress and the fusion research community, the Department of Energy has yet to implement much of the guidance provided by these external advisory reports, nor has DOE implemented much of the direction provided in law. We need to do better, especially at this time when there is so much more work to do in this field.

I very much look forward to the testimony today from this panel of distinguished experts. With that, I yield back.