



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

Opening Statement

**Ranking Member Valerie Foushee (D-NC)
of the Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight**

Joint Subcommittee Hearing:
Subcommittee on Investigations and Oversight
Subcommittee on Energy

*Return on Unprecedented Investment: An Analysis of the Department of Energy's
Implementation of the IIJA, the IRA, and the CHIPS and Science Act*

May 10, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Williams and Chairman Obernolte, for holding this joint subcommittee hearing today.

I appreciate this opportunity to discuss the transformational investments made by the 117th Congress in research, development, and demonstration programs overseen by the Department of Energy.

DOE is poised to play a vital role in addressing our most pressing energy challenges of the 21st Century. From battery storage and solar technology to grid efficiency and nuclear fusion, DOE's research portfolio represents a vast and multifaceted investment in America's economy, its workers, and its energy security.

Districts all across America benefit from this investment. For example, a consortium of four research universities in my district – North Carolina's Fourth – jointly hosts the Triangle Universities Nuclear Laboratory, a DOE Center of Excellence. I have no doubt that many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle can cite similar initiatives in their own districts, and I hope to learn more about them today.

Laws like the CHIPS and Science Act, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act will strengthen the impact of DOE science programs many times over. These laws are empowering DOE to support basic energy research, develop energy-related technological breakthroughs at scale, and accelerate America's transition to clean energy sources. I support these laws wholeheartedly and I believe they will make America stronger and more prosperous.

I also support good faith congressional oversight of the implementation of these laws. Congress has directed significant funding increases to DOE science in recent years. Assessing the Department's management of those funds is appropriate and necessary to ensure that the agency is using taxpayer dollars wisely and acting consistently with congressional intent.

At the same time, I would caution against any unnecessary politicization of DOE's research and development activities. DOE science is primed to support critical investments that will bolster

emerging energy-sector industries and create tens of thousands of good-paying jobs for people all across the country to participate in for years to come.

Congressional scrutiny of these programs should be rigorous. But we must also be cautious not to undercut these essential investments and jeopardize the jobs and economic activity poised to emerge from them. Our constituents are counting on these investments, and we need to deliver for them.

The goal of our oversight should always be to improve the research programs that we look at, not to tear them down. That is how I intend to approach my oversight of the Department. I want a DOE that is more capable and more effective at implementing the vision Congress has set forth.

I am also excited to use today's hearing to highlight DOE's incredible scientific and technological capabilities.

DOE's scientific infrastructure is a crown jewel in the federal research enterprise. The Department's National Laboratories, its scientific offices, and its partnerships with public, private, and academic institutions stand at the frontier of breakthrough research into the energy technologies of tomorrow.

I am eager to learn more from our witnesses about how DOE intends to maximize the resources at its disposal in support of a stronger, safer, more equitable energy future.

Congress has set lofty goals, and now we are counting on DOE to deliver. I am confident that you can do it, and I am grateful to both of you, as well as all of the scientists who work at and with the Department, for your commitment and your dedication to public service.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.