



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

Opening Statement

**Ranking Member Deborah Ross (D-NC)
of the Subcommittee on Energy**

**Joint Subcommittee Hearing:
Subcommittee on Research & Technology
Subcommittee on Energy**

Pursuing the Golden Age of Innovation: Strategic Priorities in Biotechnology

June 5th, 2025

Good morning and thank you, Chairman Obernolte and Chairman Weber, for convening this hearing today to discuss the recommendations of the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology, and how we can continue to advance the biotechnology research and development ecosystem here in the U.S.

I also want to thank our distinguished witnesses for being here to share their testimony and insights.

Biotechnology is a field that spans from food and agriculture to energy, and one that enables and supports so many of our other sectors of the economy. It includes the energy-dense feedstocks that we use to make biofuels, energy-efficient crops that require less water and land to grow, and the bioremediation of plastic pollutants that chronically plague our waterways.

Emerging biotechnologies are developing real solutions that will help the everyday lives of Americans. In my district, the Research Triangle Park, North America's largest research park has an abundance of biotechnology companies working on these very issues.

Furthermore, North Carolina State University is one of the leaders in biotechnology research and I am proud to support their efforts. During regular times, this would be a straightforward topic for the Committee to discuss, but in light of this Administration's ridiculous budget proposal to gut funding for a broad range of critical innovation programs, we are also forced to start considering the potential impacts from the rippling effect of these cuts.

The National Security Commission's final report was clear—the United States is falling behind China in key biotechnology areas. What we need to do to position our nation for success is to develop a federal strategy around biotechnology, provide adequate federal funding, foster innovation from early-stage research through the commercialization of new technologies, continue to attract top talent both domestically and internationally, and establish biotechnology partnerships with our allies.

Instead, the Administration released a budget proposal doing just the opposite.

A 74.5% cut to funding the Department of Energy's Bioenergy Technologies Office, and a 56% cut to its Biological and Environmental Research program.

And then there are the untold impacts of the massive cuts to expert staff in these Offices that Elon Musk's DOGE helped orchestrate.

This level of funding would be devastating to our research enterprise and, if enacted, would essentially hand our leadership in biotechnology to China on a silver platter. And for what? The sum of these cuts is a drop in the bucket of our federal budget, yet they would come at a cost that will be multiples higher to our national competitiveness and would be felt for decades.

We only have to look at what happened to our manufacturing industry over the last half century to see that history will repeat itself. If we lose our leadership to China in biotechnology research, then we will start to see more and more scientific breakthroughs happening overseas, with us playing catch-up.

We will also have fewer startups and less private investment in biotechnology because we have less innovation happening domestically, which means fewer jobs for our future students, and fewer products being designed and manufactured in the United States, but instead being imported at a higher cost.

The Commission's report concluded that China is using every tool at its disposal to replace the United States as the global leader in biotechnology, and that if we fail to meet the moment, our economic leadership will be weakened for generations. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on how we can best avoid this dire future.

With that, I thank you Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

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