



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

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## Opening Statement

**Congressman Paul Tonko (D-NY)**

Full Committee Markup of:

*H.R. 4091, the ARPA-E Reauthorization Act of 2019*

*H.R. 2051, the Sustainable Chemistry Research and Development Act of 2019*

*H.R. 1709, the Science Integrity Act*

Thursday, October 17, 2019

Chairwoman Johnson, thank you for your longstanding support of the Scientific Integrity Act. Thank you also to Chairwoman Stevens for your strong support of the bill and to Ranking Members Lucas and Baird for helping us to move the bill in a bipartisan fashion.

I also want to thank the 224 members who have supported this commonsense, good government legislation.

As an engineer with a deep respect for science, federal scientific integrity standards have been a concern of mine for many years. Allowing political power or special interests to manipulate or suppress federal science hurts all of us.

We have seen over and over that when government scientific reports are delayed, distorted or hidden, the American people pay the price in the form of lost rights and freedoms, lost wages to medical bills, burned or flooded homes, lost years from our lives and the irreplaceable loss of loved ones. These are the very consequences that scientific integrity policies exist to prevent.

Scientific integrity is a longstanding concern that transcends any one party or political administration. In fact, I began working on the Scientific Integrity Act in the summer of 2016 when we had a Democratic administration. And the fact remains: whether a Democrat or a Republican sits in the Speaker's chair or the Oval Office, we need strong scientific integrity policies.

This bill, H.R. 1709, would do just that, insulating public scientific research and reports from the distorting influence of political and special interests by ensuring strong scientific integrity standards at America's science agencies.

More than 20 federal agencies have some form of a scientific integrity policy but those policies are uneven in their enforcement and scope.

Earlier this year, more than 60 organizations sent a letter to the committee in support of Congress moving the Scientific Integrity Act forward. I want to thank all those groups for their support.

Dr. Baird thank you again for your studious support and leadership on the nonpartisan need for strong, consistent scientific integrity policies and for working with me to move this important legislation forward.

I have long believed that there should be room for bipartisan action. It can be easy to dismiss any call for accountability or transparency as politically motivated.

I am pleased to say that this is not the case when it comes to Scientific Integrity.

During our Science Committee legislative hearing on the Scientific Integrity Act in July, both Republican and Democratic witnesses spoke of the need for strong scientific integrity policies that transcend politics or partisanship.

Dr. Roger Pielke, the Republican witness, agreed, calling on Congress to QUOTE “quickly & in bipartisan fashion pass scientific integrity legislation.”

Today we heed that call.

I also want to thank my friends Ranking Members Lucas and Baird again. Through your leadership we have strengthened the bill including strengthening reporting requirements to Congress, making scientific integrity policies easier for all to access and adding more specificity to several provisions.

I also want thank Dahlia Sokolov on the Science Committee staff who has worked on this with my staff for several years providing expertise and critical support. Thank you to Janie Thompson and Jenn Wickre for their work on getting this across the finish line. And thank you to all my colleagues on this committee for championing Scientific Integrity.

Science doesn't serve political power, especially when American taxpayers are subsidizing it. At its best, science just tries to tell us the truth. And that is always worth protecting.

I hope that we can continue to work together as a committee to strengthen America's scientific integrity policies and make sure that we uphold high scientific standards across all federal science agencies, no matter what party is in office.

I ask for your support on today's vote on the Scientific Integrity Act.