

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Marc Veasey (D-TX)
of the Subcommittee on Energy

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Research and Technology
Subcommittee on Energy
Artificial Intelligence – With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility
June 26, 2018

Thank you, Chairwoman Comstock and Chairman Weber for holding this hearing today, and thank you to all our witnesses for providing their expertise on this topic. I am looking forward to hearing what you all have to say.

America is a country of innovation, and in the digital world of today more and more industries are relying on advanced technologies and connectivity to overcome new challenges. Artificial Intelligence and Big Data are impacting every facet of production and commerce. AI has the ability to mimic cognitive functions such as problem solving and learning, making it a critical resource as we encounter never-before-seen problems.

Those in the energy sector have already seen improvements in productivity and efficiency and can expect to see even more advancements in the coming years. AI can be used to process and analyze data in previously unexplored ways. Technologies such as sensor-equipped aircraft engines, locomotives, gas turbines and wind turbines are now able to track production efficiency and the wear and tear on vital machinery. With that technology, we can expect significant reductions in fuel consumption as well as carbon emissions.

AI could also significantly improve our ability to detect failures before they occur and prevent disasters, saving money, time, and lives. And through the use of analytics, sensors, and operational data, AI can be used to manage, maintain, and optimize systems ranging from energy storage components to power plants to the electric grid.

As digital technologies revolutionize the energy sector, we must ensure safe and responsible execution of these processes. AI systems learn and adapt through continuous modelling of interaction data and feedback. Precautions must be put in place to guarantee the integrity of these mechanisms as they evaluate mass quantities of machine and user data. With Americans right to privacy under threat, security of these connected systems is of the utmost importance.

Nevertheless, I am excited to learn more about valuable benefits that AI may be able to provide for our economy and wellbeing alike. With a Gartner research study reporting that AI will generate 2.3 million jobs by 2020, the growth AI will bring not only to the energy sector, but to healthcare, transportation, education, and more, will help ensure the prosperity of our nation.

I look forward to seeing what light our witnesses can shed on these topics, and what we in Congress can do to enable the development and deployment of these promising technologies. Thank you, and I yield back the remainder of my time.