

OPENING STATEMENT  
**Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
*Resiliency: The Electric Grid's Only Hope*  
October, 3, 2016

Good morning. Let me begin by saying my heart is with all those affected by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria, including the families of those who lost their loved ones as a result of these devastating hurricanes. As the floodwaters recede and the rebuilding process begins, we should take note of just how important conversations like the one we are having today really are. Emergency response planning, investments in research, and basic building and infrastructure standards make all the difference in moments like these. Efforts to create resilient communities save lives.

I am pleased to welcome two resilient Texans on the panel today – Dr. Dillingham and Mr. Baum. Dr. Dillingham is with the Houston Advanced Research Center and saw the damage of Hurricane Harvey for himself. I am glad to hear that you and your family are doing okay and that your community is recovering. I look forward to hearing your initial assessment of Hurricane Harvey's impact on the Texas electricity infrastructure and what should be done to make it more resilient going forward.

The hurricanes we just experienced were indeed devastating, but we need to prepare for much worse. Hurricanes are projected to become more intense in the coming decades. Climate change is happening, and scientists indicate that one of the long-term consequences of it is more intense hurricanes and tropical storms. A National Academies report released just last year, which included some of the foremost experts on this topic, concluded that there is considerable confidence that tropical cyclones will become more intense as the climate warms.

So, what does this mean for our communities? It means that our existing flood maps, can no longer reliably project the scale of hurricane-related flooding. For our electricity infrastructure in particular, it means that there will be more flooded substations in our coastal regions and more power outages as a result. Today in West Houston, thousands of CenterPoint customers are still relying on a temporary mobile substation because their substation was under four feet of water after Hurricane Harvey, and it will take months to repair.

While natural disasters have certainly dominated our attention over the past several weeks, they are not the only threats to the electric grid. Solar flares, cyber-attacks, physical attacks, operator mistakes, and aging infrastructure also pose unique risks to the electric grid and each must be addressed if we want to improve the resiliency of our electricity infrastructure. So, how can we do it? Fortunately, the National Academies addressed this very question in a report released in July. I look forward to hearing from Dr. Sanders, one of the authors of that report, about the conclusions he and his colleagues reached.

In particular, I would like to draw attention to one key overarching recommendation that I strongly believe this Committee should act on. The report recommends that Congress and DOE sustain and expand R&D activities in grid modernization, cybersecurity, and systems integration.

It specifically highlights the critical work of DOE's Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability and the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. Unfortunately, the President has proposed to slash programs in these offices. I hope my colleagues will join me in offering our strong support for these activities in the face of these ill-advised proposed funding cuts.

Before I conclude, I would also like to note for the record that it is now October and we have still not had a representative from the Department of Energy come before the Committee. That is unacceptable. In order for this Committee to be able to fulfill its oversight responsibilities, I urge the Chairman to schedule a hearing with Secretary Perry as soon as possible, and to invite Administration witnesses to relevant hearings as we examine key issues under their purview.

Thank you. I yield back the balance of my time.