

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

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
Markup of: *H.R. 4378, the “Nuclear Energy Research Infrastructure Act of 2017”*  
November 15, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I am pleased to cosponsor this bill with Congressman Weber.

This legislation marks another accomplishment in our continued collaboration to advance nuclear energy innovation.

Nuclear power plays a vital role in providing our country with clean, reliable energy. But there are currently technical, economic, and policy challenges that prevent nuclear energy from playing a larger role in enabling our clean energy future.

This bill, the *Nuclear Energy Research Infrastructure Act*, would help address these challenges. It expands on a provision included in another bill that I cosponsored with Mr. Weber and the Chairman - *H.R. 431, the Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act* - which passed the House in January on voice vote as part of yet another bill that I cosponsored with these two gentlemen – H.R. 589, the *Department of Energy Research and Innovation Act*.

The bill we are considering today would provide the Department of Energy the direction and funding it needs to create a national user facility with critical capabilities to advance nuclear technologies in America. I am hopeful that if we provide our scientists and industry leaders with the right tools, they can fulfill the promise of clean nuclear energy that is safer, less expensive, more efficient, and produces less waste than the current fleet of reactors.

I also strongly support the inclusion of explicit funding levels as a part of this authorization. Providing the Department and Congressional appropriators with a funding profile for research activities and projects is a crucial responsibility in our role as an authorizing committee. In particular, this helps ensure that construction of cutting edge research facilities like this one have the resources they need to be completed on time and on budget, thus making sure that the U.S. taxpayers who are footing these bills are getting the most value for their hard-earned dollars.

I hope we can continue to include funding authorizations in future bills passed out of the Committee and I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle as we work to strengthen America’s research enterprise across all of our agencies.

I encourage my colleagues to support the bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.