

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

Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Environment

“Leading the Way: Examining Advances in Environmental Technologies”

June 21, 2017

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today. I will be brief in my opening remarks.

I want to first note that the technologies represented by this panel range widely in terms of where they were developed: in one case, at a Fortune Global 500 company, in another, at a start-up company, and finally in one case it was an individual with the know-how and vision to build something himself. This hearing is an opportunity to discuss not just their technological successes, but also the important role that federal investments have played at various stages of the development of their technologies.

I look forward to hearing these witnesses tell us about the technologies that they have developed and their potential applications. However, I must point out that the budgets of two federal agencies tasked with environmental monitoring and with helping to develop monitoring technologies—namely, EPA and NOAA—have their budgets severely cut in the President’s FY 2018 budget request.

I would hope that the next hearings this Committee schedules will focus on those budget requests. This Committee has an obligation to ensure that budget requests for the Agency tasked with protecting public health and the environment—EPA, and the Agency tasked with providing key climate and weather data for the protection of life and property—NOAA, are sufficient to carry out their respective missions. It has been more than 3 months since the President submitted his FY 18 budget blueprint to Congress and a month since we received the details of that budget plan.

It is past time for this Committee to schedule a hearing on EPA’s budget request, to allow Members an opportunity to question EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt about that proposal. Certainly, many of my colleagues will want to hear an explanation of the severe, and as some have described them, draconian cuts proposed for his agency.

I also want to hear about NOAA’s budget request, but I am more troubled by the fact that as we head into hurricane season the Trump Administration has yet to even nominate an Administrator for NOAA, leaving the Agency essentially without clear direction.

Mr. Chairman, this Committee has a long tradition of being committed to serious oversight, no matter who is in the White House. We need to move quickly to hold substantive budget hearings for both EPA and NOAA, as is already happening elsewhere on the Hill, and I hope that such hearings will be announced in the very near future.

Thank you and I yield back.