

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD
RANKING MEMBER EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

June 15, 2011

Hearing

Examining Department of Energy Clean Technology Programs

U.S. House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Subcommittee on Energy and Environment

I thank Chairman Harris for calling this important hearing today, and I welcome all of our distinguished panelists to the Committee. In particular, I would like to welcome Dr. Majumdar, who was chosen as the first leader of a small and specialized program that saw its origins here in this Committee. Dr. Majumdar has worked tirelessly to ensure that ARPA-E exceeds our expectations while staying true to the authorizing legislation. The President picked the right person for the job, and I want to thank you for your work.

Investments in EERE, ARPA-E, and the Loan Guarantee program serve to strengthen U.S. scientific and economic leadership as they advance innovation in a wide range of technology areas, support the next generation of scientists and technology leaders, seed the industries of tomorrow, and ultimately lay the groundwork for a cleaner, more sustainable energy future.

Unfortunately, these programs are seeing devastating cuts in the Energy and Water Appropriations bill now moving to the House floor. I understand the constraints the Appropriators were under. I commend them for working together to protect DOE innovation programs given an allocation that all but ensured that most of the programs would see significant cuts, and that some could have been eliminated altogether. However, I am deeply concerned that these and further efforts at cuts will do lasting harm to our ability to meet our energy objectives and compete in the global marketplace.

Every Member feels the pressure to act to bring down energy prices now and insulate our economy from future price shocks. Unfortunately, we are limited in the types of policies we have to achieve this, and opening up new leases for domestic oil and gas production will not be enough in the short or long-term. However, Congress can continue to support the development and demonstration of energy efficiency technologies – an investment that is already paying dividends. Unfortunately, while savings through efficiency are undoubtedly saving money for families and businesses across the country, we know that this is still not enough for the private sector to act alone.

It is also time to take seriously the need to modernize our energy infrastructure and transition away from energy sources and technologies of the past. We have extended the lifetimes and stretched the infrastructure's capacity to the point where massive new investments will be needed in the near future. The question is, do we kick the can down the road or replace it with the same outdated technologies, or do we take this opportunity and leverage our resources to transition to new, cleaner, more efficient technologies, many of which can be made in the U.S? If the nuclear and fossil energy sectors - some of the most profitable and technologically advanced industries in the world - warrant continued taxpayer investment, as some of my colleagues propose, then additional funding could certainly be leveraged to exploit the full potential of the less-commercially mature alternative energy technologies.

ARPA-E has been an undeniable success. If allowed the time and resources to thrive, ARPA-E may well represent the first of a new generation of smaller, more agile and efficient research programs. But, for

ARPA-E to be effective, it must continue to grow. Being temporary hires, the initial team that started ARPA-E will be leaving soon, and new project managers must be recruited to take their place. To attract the same caliber of managers away from the private sector, and often away from their families, there must be some indication of consistent and robust funding to support new fields of exploration. With the current Energy and Water bill devoting \$100 million for fiscal year 2012, while appreciated, ARPA-E gets perilously close to dying on the vine.

I believe that our constituents understand that and still rely on our collective wisdom to ensure the long-term welfare of our nation through such strategic investments. They know that this country was built on a foundation of innovation, hard work, and the willingness to take big risks, and that government still plays an indispensable role in filling the voids that the private sector is not structured to do.

In a rapidly changing global marketplace, facing new competitors that do not play by the same free-market rules, the only thing we can know for sure is that the future of the U.S. economy will be dictated by our willingness to push back the frontiers in all fields of science and technology. The innovation programs at the Department of Energy, with their unmatched talent, world-class facilities, and unique role in taking on technology challenges that the private sector cannot do alone, are some of our most effective tools in ensuring our long-term economic growth.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.