

OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Energy
“H.R. 4084, the Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act”
December 3, 2015

Good morning and thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this hearing on the Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act, which I am very pleased to co-sponsor with you. I would also like to thank the Acting Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy, Mr. John Kotek, for agreeing to be here today on such short notice. I hope that our friends in the Senate can finish the task of removing that “Acting” from your title soon – you clearly deserve it.

As I have noted before, nuclear power plays a vital role in providing our country with clean, reliable energy. Nationally, it produces almost 20 percent of our total electric power, and it provides almost 9 percent of the electricity generated in the great state of Texas - all with essentially no greenhouse gas emissions.

But there currently are technical, economic, and policy challenges that prevent nuclear energy from playing a larger role in enabling our clean energy future. The Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act takes several positive steps to address these challenges. Implementing the provisions in this bill will help accelerate the development of advanced nuclear energy technologies that are safer, less expensive, more efficient, and produce less waste than the current generation of nuclear reactors.

I look forward to hearing from the distinguished panel we have here today on any improvements we can make to this legislation to achieve these goals.

I would also like to express my appreciation for the process we followed to put this bill together. Majority and Minority staff worked closely together every step of the way, from engaging stakeholders through helping to craft and incorporate suggested changes to bill language. This is a great example of what we can achieve when we put politics aside and join forces to address the challenges facing our nation’s research enterprise.

With that, I yield back.