

OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Brad Miller

November 30, 2011

Hearing on EPA Research and Laboratories

“Fostering Quality Science at EPA: Perspectives on Common Sense Reform”

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

Subcommittee on Energy and Environment

Thank you Chairman Harris. Today the Subcommittee meets again for part two of the EPA research and science series of hearings. The first hearing two weeks ago was pretty disappointing and a missed opportunity. The stated purpose of our hearing a couple of weeks ago was to examine the ability of EPA’s research enterprise to meet the agency’s mission to protect public health and the environment. However many of my colleagues on the other side of the aisle decided to use their time to focus on EPA’s hydraulic fracturing study rather than on that stated purpose. I believe the goal of this series of hearings is to establish a useful Committee record in preparation of writing legislation to reauthorize the Environmental Research, Development, and Demonstration Authorization Act (ERDDA).

Today’s hearing does not appear to be any more likely to inform the committee about structural and substantive concerns of stakeholders related to EPA’s research activities. It is not balanced, comprehensive, or even helpful. This hearing looks just like what we are seeing on the House floor this week –the anti-regulation, anti-science talking points of the far right. As I said a couple of weeks ago, I hoped that my Republican counterparts were really interested in reform that will lead to better research to enhance public health and protect the environment. Although we all agree that there are legitimate concerns related to EPA’s research enterprise, this hearing doesn’t come close to helping us understand or address these issues. The agency’s scientific research is important as more complex environmental issues emerge and evolve that need to be understood and addressed. Scientific research, knowledge, and technical information are fundamental to EPA’s mission and inform its standard-setting, regulatory, compliance, and enforcement functions. That is why Congress saw fit to create advisory bodies at EPA, such as the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC), which was created to provide independent advice on the science which allows the Administrator to make regulatory decisions.

I really hoped that today we would have a productive conversation about how best to position the EPA to perform its mission of protecting human health and the environment. If we are really serious about working towards reauthorizing ERDDA, we must establish a Committee record that will offer us a wide-range of views on how best to draft legislation to better serve the agency as well as the people that we all represent. If that is the case, I hope that we can commit to working together after today in formulating hearings and panels that will serve that purpose.

With that, Chairman Harris, I yield back.