OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Department of Energy Science & Technology Priorities
Full Committee Hearing

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Thank you, Chairman Smith for holding this hearing. I would also like to thank Secretary Moniz for being here today to discuss the proposed DOE budget and for his continued service to our nation.

Let me start by reminding my colleagues that we have seen how government-supported research can pay off when it comes to energy development. DOE-supported research was key to the development of high-efficiency gas turbines for coal plants, nuclear reactors, and the directional drilling and hydraulic fracturing technologies and techniques that have led to the shale gas boom of today. But we should remember that those achievements required decades of federal investment, the overwhelming majority of which was focused on fossil energy and the first generations of nuclear power reactors. I continue to support research to make today's technologies safer, cleaner, and more efficient, but we also have to find the greatest value for our investment of taxpayer dollars. The reality today is that the emerging energy technology sectors that can most benefit from government support. That is where the priorities set by DOE's Fiscal Year 2016 budget request come into play.

I am pleased with much of the Department's budget request for science and energy research this year. If adopted, the DOE Office of Science, the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, ARPA-E, the Office of Electricity, and Nuclear Energy would all receive much-needed boosts to advance the development of fundamental science and clean energy technologies that will be vital to our national security, our economy, and the environment in the decades to come. For example, the geothermal and marine energy research programs would establish important new test sites to help advance next generation renewable energy technologies, and the Department's important advanced manufacturing program would expand considerably. I am also pleased to see that, under the Secretary's leadership, the Department is clearly making progress in coordinating several critical research areas that cut across its various programs, including the energy-water nexus – which I personally am very concerned about, advanced computing, and modernization of our woefully outdated electric grid.

However, I do have concerns with a few areas of the Department's proposed budget. The advanced reactor program within the Office of Nuclear Energy and the fusion energy program within the Office of Science would both receive sizable cuts under the proposed DOE budget. Over the long term, both of these types of advanced technologies have the potential to play a major role in enabling a vibrant low-carbon economy, so I hope we can discuss this further and see if, perhaps, these funding levels should be reconsidered. In addition, while I certainly appreciate seeing the Department place a stronger emphasis on addressing the environmental

impacts of developing our coal and natural gas resources, I would like to learn more about how the significant shifts you've proposed within the Fossil Energy research budget will affect these efforts.

All that said, I believe that what the Department has proposed a serious request and worthy of our careful consideration. I look forward to working with you, Mr. Secretary, and my colleagues across the aisle, to address any remaining concerns we have and to ensure that you have the direction, tools, and resources you need to help secure our nation's energy future.

With that I yield back the balance of my time.