OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Innovations in Battery Storage for Renewable Energy
Energy Subcommittee Hearing

May 1, 2015

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today.

Today we will hear about the Department of Energy's important role in advancing new large-scale energy storage technologies, which are critical to making our electric grid more efficient, reliable, and resilient, enabling a cleaner environment and lower costs for consumers.

The title of this hearing aside, improvements in energy storage are actually important for all forms of electricity generation, not just renewable energy production, as demand for electric power is often highly variable. Currently, high capacity power plants are required to meet expensive peaks in demand while operating below capacity for when demand is low. Grid-scale energy storage allows lower capacity plants to meet the same demand at a lower cost.

Dr. Gyuk, I am encouraged by DOE's work on large-scale energy storage solutions to date, and I frankly believe that given your track record and the size of this problem, your budget should be much, much higher than the $12 million that your entire program received last year.

It should be noted that another major contributor to early-stage research in this area is ARPA-E. This is yet one more reason that I was so dismayed that the majority proposed to cut this agency by 50 percent in their COMPETES bill just last week. I look forward to discussing the essential role that both ARPA-E and DOE's Office of Electricity play in accelerating the development and commercialization of these technologies here in the U.S.

As highlighted in the Department's first, widely praised Quadrennial Energy Review – which was released just last week – this area is vital to the future of America's energy infrastructure, and there is still much more work that needs to be done.

Thank you and with that I yield back the balance of my time