

OPENING STATEMENT

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

Nuclear Energy Innovation and the National Labs
Energy Subcommittee Hearing

May 13, 2015

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you to our witnesses for being here today to discuss their involvement in innovative nuclear energy research.

The more conventional form of nuclear power, known as fission, currently plays a pivotal role in providing our country with reliable energy. As a nation, 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 along with the benefits of that energy, these sources also produce radioactive waste products, and developing a permanent management solution for those waste products remains a challenge.

Historically, long-term storage has been the primary option discussed for managing that waste, but today we are going to hear about other, more innovative options that deserve serious consideration from this Committee. And we will hear about ideas for public-private partnerships to develop the next generation of these reactors, which may well be more efficient and produce less waste.

I am also excited to learn more about new, innovative approaches to fusion energy. Nuclear fusion has the potential to provide the world with a clean, safe, and practically inexhaustible source of energy. Producing reliable electric power from fusion would undoubtedly serve as one of the biggest and most important scientific achievements in the history of humankind. This is why I am so supportive of a strong research program that can help us overcome the remaining scientific and engineering challenges for this potential to become a reality.

Again, I thank each of you for joining us today and with that I yield back the balance of my time.