

OPENING STATEMENT
Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Energy
“Innovation in Solar Fuels, Electricity Storage, and Advanced Materials”
June 15, 2016

Thank you Chairman Weber for calling this hearing, and thank you to our excellent panel of witnesses for being here today.

The purpose of today’s hearing is to discuss some of the research activities supported by the Department of Energy Office of Science’s Basic Energy Sciences program. This program supports critical fundamental research to better understand matter and energy at the electronic, atomic, and molecular levels. Such knowledge is vital for improving the efficiency and cost competitiveness of new energy technologies, and will undoubtedly lead to a cleaner and more sustainable energy future.

More than 14,000 scientists and 170 research institutions, as well as hundreds of private industry researchers across the United States, rely on the Basic Energy Sciences program each year for its state-of-the-art user facilities as well as its competitive research grants. Yet, as in many other research areas, our leadership position in energy innovation is now being aggressively challenged by other members of the international community.

I would like to call attention to the Basic Energy Sciences Advisory Committee’s (BESAC) report released on June 9th which details many priorities for upgrading the major user facilities under this program’s purview. The BESAC report finds five project upgrades to be “absolutely central to contribute to world leading science.” The report also notes that “increased international competition provides both a challenge and an opportunity for the U.S.”

I hope that one area on which many of my friends on the other side of the aisle and I can agree upon is the need to support and strengthen American leadership in energy innovation, and I look forward to working with my colleagues to ensure that the Basic Energy Sciences program and other important programs in this area are as robust and effective as they can possibly be.

I want to thank our witnesses again for being here, and I look forward to your testimony.

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I yield back.