

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

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittees on Oversight and Energy
“Examining Misconduct and Intimidation of Scientists by Senior DOE Officials”
September 21, 2016

Good morning, and thank you to Chairman Loudermilk and Chairman Weber for holding this hearing today.

I will be very brief in my remarks. The title of today’s hearing is quite provocative. It ostensibly references a personnel action against a DOE employee that ultimately was resolved by the Department and Dr. Metting reaching a settlement almost a year ago. It is my understanding that under the agreement, the terms of the settlement remain sealed. As a result, I would hope that Members will not spend today’s hearing trying to re-litigate that dispute.

Without question, we want to ensure that our federal agencies and departments maintain open and clear communication channels with Congress, and that our scientists are able to provide their best scientific assessments when asked by Congress to do so. I have no doubt of DOE Secretary Moniz’s commitment to scientific integrity, and I expect that any shortcomings identified as a result of the 2014 incident will be taken to heart and addressed by the Department. If this hearing delivers that message to DOE management, it will have performed a service.

However, I cannot close without expressing the hope that this Committee will follow up this hearing by taking a look at its own actions. It is more than a little ironic that the Majority has framed this hearing around protecting federal scientists from intimidation when the Majority itself has taken extreme steps to intimidate scientists at NOAA, making unsupported allegations of scientific misconduct against them and even accusing them of altering their climate science research results to promote a political agenda. Those false allegations have tarnished this Committee, and I think NOAA’s scientists are owed an apology by our Majority. But I’m not holding my breath that one will be forthcoming any time soon.

With that, I want to welcome our witnesses to today’s hearing, and I yield back the balance of my time.