

## OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Alan Grayson (D-FL)  
Subcommittee on Energy  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

*“Department of Energy Oversight: Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy”*  
Energy Subcommittee Hearing

March 24, 2015

Thank you, Chairman Weber, for holding this hearing, and thank you to our witnesses for appearing here today.

America is mired in a long-term negative energy trade balance. According to the most recent figures from the Energy Information Administration, our energy trade deficit – as of the fourth quarter of 2013 – was \$203 billion.

Every year, for the past two generations, energy imports have cost us hundreds of billions of dollars. Unfortunately, there are also massive hidden costs that aren't reflected in the prices Americans actually pay for energy.

One recent study estimates that the U.S. has spent about \$8 trillion from 1976 through 2010, merely *defending* access to oil supplies in the Persian Gulf. Not producing, not acquiring, not transporting – but *defending* access to oil. That's \$25,000 for every man, woman, and child in America. Continuing to pursue a business-as-usual energy portfolio clearly costs not only American dollars, but American lives.

We can't just drill our way out of this problem.

Because the price for oil is set globally, a disruption of oil from the Middle East could severely spike U.S. oil prices no matter how much of it we are able to pull from the ground. That's why reducing dependence on oil, not just “foreign oil”, is a key strategic objective for both the U.S. economy and the U.S. military.

We can, and we must, end this strategic energy deficit. We can create a domestic energy infrastructure that is reliable, resilient, and far less dependent on volatile regions of the world.

Toward these ends, the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, or “EERE”, which we are here to talk about today, helps make that future come faster. EERE's Sustainable Transportation technology program focuses on improving efficiency in vehicles, and developing new alternative fuels from domestic resources.

Research investments made by this program have reduced electric vehicle battery costs by 70% since 2008. They have also reduced the manufacturing costs for automotive fuel cells by more than 50% since 2006.

Research and development in biofuels has helped reduce production costs of cellulosic ethanol by more than \$6 per gallon, to around \$3.20 per gallon today, making it cost-competitive with gasoline.

Beyond reducing our crippling dependence on oil, EERE's programs to improve energy efficiency in buildings and appliances are providing major economic and environmental benefits to U.S. taxpayers as well.

Efficiency standards enacted by the Department of Energy since 2009 are projected to save consumers hundreds of billions of dollars in their utility bills through 2030, and EERE-supported research in advanced lighting technology has helped reduce LED costs by 90% since 2008.

The renewable energy sector has also benefited immensely from EERE-supported research and development. Since 2010, photovoltaic system costs have been cut in half. DOE's SunShot program, which has the goal of making solar energy cost-competitive with conventional sources by 2020, is already more than 60% of the way to achieving its cost target.

Overall, third-party evaluators estimate that from 1976 to 2008, EERE investments of \$15 billion have resulted in an estimated economic benefit to the United States of \$388 billion—a net return of more than 24 to 1. That is an impressive track record, and it is one we should continue to support.

Private investors in the energy sector are beginning to move from project-level loans to holding company loans, which means renewable energy industries are starting to take off. While this development is encouraging, we must realize that there is still no ExxonMobil, nor, for that matter, an Intel or Pfizer, in the renewable energy sector. There remains a unique government role in supporting the advancement of new technologies at a sufficient pace to meet our national economic, environmental, and energy security needs. And that is what I look forward to hearing more about today.

The results from EERE's programs are tangible, and they are having direct, positive impacts on people's lives.

I want to thank Dr. Danielson and his Office for their productive work, and for the information that they provide here today.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, and with that I yield the balance of my time.