

## OPENING STATEMENT

### HON. BART GORDON (D-TN) Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on Science

#### Hearing: *Should Congress Establish "ARPA-E," the Advanced Research Projects Agency – Energy?*

March 9, 2006

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing today to consider the merits of the ARPA-E proposal. This proposal arose from a recommendation by a Committee of the National Academy of Science, National Academy of Engineering and the Institute of Medicine. The Committee was established at the request of certain Senators and House Members, including Chairman Boehlert and me.

The Academies were asked to look at what actions "federal policy-makers could take to enhance the science and technology enterprise so that the United States can successfully compete, prosper, and be secure in the global community of the 21<sup>st</sup> century." We also asked the Academies to tell us what strategy could be used to implement each of their recommended actions. The result was the Committee's report entitled, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, which was released late last year.

I have taken a different approach from the Senate in casting the report's recommendations into legislative language. Rather than introducing a comprehensive package as the Senate did, I have introduced a package of three bills that are primarily in the jurisdiction of the Science Committee. My bills deal with those recommendations in Science Education, and Science and Engineering. The third bill establishes an ARPA-E organization within DOE.

My ARPA-E bill, H.R. 4435, has a very defined goal - to reduce imports of energy from foreign sources by 20 percent within 10 years through the development of transforming energy technologies. The Director of ARPA-E reports to the Secretary. However, the bill provides great flexibility to the Director in structuring and managing the organization to meet the goal.

The *Rising Above the Gathering Storm Report* was very vague in how its proposed ARPA-E would be organized and exactly what it would accomplish. I, too, am flexible in considering in how this organization should be put together and how it should accomplish meeting the 20 percent goal. I do worry, however, that overly prescriptive legislation could inhibit the willingness of smart men and women to join ARPA-E and the ability of ARPA-E managers to accomplish whatever goals are ultimately established.

Mr. Chairman, I believe this hearing will be a learning experience for all the members of the Committee. Today's witnesses will bring us a variety of perspectives on how this organization should be put together and what it should do. I look forward to hearing their testimony today.

Norman Augustine, The Chairman of the Academies Committee, gave the Science Committee this sobering assessment in his testimony last fall: "It is the unanimous view of our Committee that America today faces a serious and intensifying challenge with regard to its future competitiveness and standard of living. Further, we appear to be on a losing path."

I trust that this is only the first of a number of hearings to address how the nation will remain competitive. All the outside studies we need are complete; now is the time to act - not only on ARPA-E - but on all the other recommendations in this Committee's jurisdiction.

I look forward to working with the Chairman as we go forward on this important issue. I yield back the balance of my time.