

## OPENING STATEMENT

**HON. MIKE HONDA (D-CA)**  
**Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy**  
**U.S. House Committee on Science**

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

**March 9, 2006**

I thank Chairman Boehlert and Ranking Member Gordon for holding this important hearing today, and I thank our distinguished witnesses for making the time to be here.

I've been in enough hearings of this Committee to know that most of us on this Committee, from both sides of the aisle, are on roughly the same page when it comes to recognizing that our nation is faced with significant energy challenges in the future and that science and technology will play an important role in addressing those challenges.

Where we differ is in the details. Some of us would prefer to see more solar electricity generation, others nuclear, and still others clean coal. Should we focus on hybrids, hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, or liquid fuels produced from non fossil sources? I could go on all day listing all of the options that are probably supported by one member or another of this Committee.

The breadth of these short lists makes it clear that how we approach energy in the future is something we need to put a lot of thought into. Are we going to need to focus on research dollars in some very basic areas to generate new knowledge? Should we focus on bringing technologies that have already been invented within DOE labs but which are currently sitting on the shelf into the marketplace? Do we need to provide the private sector with assistance to overcome market failures?

Each of these approaches probably requires a different kind of program or agency to implement it. At this point, we don't know which one we are thinking about, so it is essential that we talk about all of the possibilities. The ARPA-E model is one of those options, and I've cosponsored Ranking Member Gordon's ARPA-E bill because I think it is an idea we should be talking about. I'll admit that in the wake of a hearing we had about DARPA's current directions in the area of computer science I'm a bit wary of creating another organization like it that might lose its way after being around for a long time, but if we take care we can design ARPA-E to avoid those problems.

I look forward to hearing from our distinguished witnesses today, including my friend and Nobel Laureate Dr. Steve Chu of Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, about their thoughts on the directions we should be taking with our future energy policy.