

COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND  
TECHNOLOGY**  
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)  
Hearing on Department of Energy Science and Technology Priorities**

**Chairman Smith:** The Science, Space, and Technology Committee has jurisdiction over civilian science and technology issues at the Department of Energy (DOE). These areas comprise approximately one third of the DOE's budget, or over 9 billion dollars.

Our jurisdiction includes the DOE's Office of Science, which conducts critical research in areas like high energy physics, advanced scientific computing, and basic energy sciences. Our jurisdiction also includes research and development in fossil, nuclear and renewable energy.

I want to thank our witness, Secretary Moniz, for joining us today. We last heard from Dr. Moniz in June and we want to thank him for continuing our tradition of hearing from the DOE Secretary on budget priorities.

Dr. Moniz has a deep knowledge of energy issues—particularly the scientific and technical issues that are a focus of this Committee. Although we may disagree on some priorities and on overall budget numbers, one thing we can agree on is how critical DOE research has been to securing the United States' preeminence in many scientific fields.

Scientists at the Department of Energy and in the private-sector have consistently collaborated to create the most reliable, affordable and secure domestic energy portfolio in the world.

The technological advancements in oil and gas extraction, and particularly hydraulic fracturing, were facilitated, in part, by DOE. These innovative technologies enabled the dramatic shale gas revolution that is transforming our economy. Technological breakthroughs and improved techniques have resulted in exponential increases in energy production. In my home state of Texas, production of oil has jumped from 400 million barrels in 2009 to over 900 million barrels in 2013.

The technological leaps in natural gas extraction have resulted in increased production and a decrease in natural gas prices. These innovative breakthroughs have also helped to improve air quality, expand access to affordable electricity and create jobs. This increased production in oil and gas is exciting but we also need to seek a balanced energy portfolio through a strategic approach to energy research and development.

Although the Obama Administration claims it supports a balanced energy portfolio, its budget request shows a different set of priorities. For instance, while research and development for Fossil Energy programs remains stagnant, funding for Renewable Energy has increased exponentially.

Lastly, we need to ensure that American tax dollars are spent wisely, and not on duplicative and overlapping programs. At a time of tightened budgets, we have to set priorities. Our first focus should be basic energy research and development. Breakthrough discoveries from basic research will provide the foundation for a secure, affordable and independent energy future.

The Administration should not “pick winners” and give subsidies to favored companies that promote non-competitive technologies. This too often leads to a waste of taxpayer dollars.

Instead, we should focus our resources on research and development that will produce technologies that will enable alternative energy sources to become economically competitive without the need for subsidies.

This is an exciting time for the United States. It is a time of abundant energy resources. The government has a role in promoting scientific discovery in the various energy fields. Basic energy research is the stepping stone to our continued success.