

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



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

Chairman Smith: To many, the Department of Energy (DOE) is typically not regarded as a “science agency.” But from its origins with the Manhattan Project to its current programs and mission, science has always served as DOE’s foundation.

Approximately \$8.5 billion, or one-third of the Department’s budget, is focused on civilian science and technology activities that fall under this Committee’s jurisdiction.

Accordingly, I want to thank our witness, Dr. Ernie Moniz, for joining us today. His presence here continues our tradition of hearing from the DOE Secretary on a regular basis.

Dr. Moniz has a deep knowledge of energy policy, particularly regarding the scientific and technical issues that are the focus of this Committee.

Dr. Moniz’s tenure begins at an extraordinary time in our nation’s energy history. We are now just a few years into an energy revolution driven by hydraulic fracturing (fracking) that has enabled dramatic increases in oil and natural gas production.

The notion of true American energy independence—long dismissed as unrealistic—is now attainable, perhaps even by the end of this decade. These developments will greatly benefit not only our economy but also geopolitics and our national security.

The shale boom has been accompanied by important energy policy debates. These include whether the Federal government should regulate fracking, whether the Keystone XL Pipeline should be built and how best to handle liquefied natural gas exports.

These issues are all of critical importance, and all connect to the scientific and technical jurisdiction of this Committee.

Also of major importance is how we prioritize Federal efforts to advance development of alternative forms of energy.

In an era of budget constraints, we need to set priorities.

I believe a better approach is to place a higher priority on fundamental research that will enable new energy technologies to become more cost-effective. This makes sense not only from a fiscal perspective, but also from a global perspective.

It is widely agreed that any effective solution to climate concerns must be global in nature. And while the U.S. has reduced carbon emissions in recent years, developing countries have shown little desire for voluntarily switching to more expensive forms of alternative energy.

For example, China and India are expected to build a combined 200 coal plants in the next three years. Global coal use is expected to increase 50 percent by 2035, which will dramatically increase carbon dioxide emissions.

This won't change unless alternative forms of energy become more cost-effective.

So, we should shift from costly subsidies to research and market-driven technological solutions that will be used around the world. To me, this is the only practical long term solution.

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