

**OPENING STATEMENT**  
**THE HONORABLE RALPH M. HALL (R-TX)**  
**Chairman, U.S. House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology**  
*An Overview of the Administration's Federal Research and Development Budget  
for Fiscal Year 2012*

Thursday, February 17, 2011

Dr. Holdren, I would like to welcome you to the Committee today. We all understand the influence the OSTP Director can have on the Administration's direction in science and technology. Today's hearing obviously covers a great deal of ground, so I will try to be brief. At the same time, there are some specific points that I would like to address before we hear from you.

Our debt today is slightly over \$14 trillion dollars, and our Nation's budget deficit has increased 50 percent over the last three years. And yet the amount of *new* debt proposed in this budget is greater than the *total* amount of debt accumulated by the federal government from 1789 to the day President Obama took the Oath of Office. This level of spending is simply not sustainable.

While it is true that prudent investments in science and technology will almost certainly yield future economic gains and will allow our knowledge economy to grow, it is also true that these gains can be thwarted by poor decision-making. Americans expect and deserve better. With our unemployment hovering at over 9 percent, they expect us to reduce or eliminate those programs that are duplicative and wasteful and examine ways to advance *real* job creation and economic growth, not just spend their hard-earned money on what the government assumes is best for them.

In his State of the Union address, President Obama spoke of the need to reinvigorate our future through innovation. American ingenuity will determine our future. However, blanket increases in our Federal spending are not the same as prudent investment and do not guarantee innovation. As stewards of the taxpayers' dollars, we must curtail runaway spending and prioritize programs that lay the foundation for entrepreneurial success.

I recognize that the President is making similar statements; yet the Administration's FY12 research and development budget, at least as it pertains to a majority of the agencies within this Committee's jurisdiction, continues a heavily weighted focus on climate change, often times taking money from other worthy investments. This rather singular focus for the Federal government's limited research dollars slows our ability to make innovative and perhaps life-altering advances in other equally, if not more important, disciplines. The National Science Foundation, DOE's Office of Science, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are all investing in remarkable research that seeks to improve the way we live our lives. Previous investments brought about the internet, the laser, barcodes, MRIs, and even sunscreen. While we should continue to study our changing climate and continue to work towards keeping our air and water clean, we must closely examine the billions of dollars spent on climate change programs with an eye toward effectiveness. From 2006 to now, we have spent \$36 billion on climate change and what do we have to show for it? A lot of programs and pamphlets. We need to change that.

With regard to NASA, last year Congress reauthorized the space agency and sent a strong signal to this Administration, which, disturbingly, they have not followed in the area of human space exploration. For our space program to remain competitive and ensure our national security, we must stay the course and develop the next-generation launch vehicle that has the capability to reach outer space and beyond. Our country cannot afford an ill-focused space program. I am concerned that the President's budget defies Congress's direction with respect to the exploration account and will have some questions for you with respect to that decision.

Dr. Holdren, we remain committed to assisting you as we move forward, but hope you will take the message back to the President that we continue to have significant concerns with the Administration's priorities for our Nation's precious and limited research and development dollars.

Thank you, and we look forward to your testimony.