



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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Statement by Randy Hultgren (R-Ill.)

Markup of H.R. 5907

Rep. Hultgren: Thank you Chairman Smith for this markup today. And I would like to thank the distinguished chairman of the Energy Subcommittee for his help on the underlying bill.

I'd also like to thank my colleague from Colorado, Mr. Perlmutter, for his help on this bipartisan legislation that would help our national labs better work with all businesses—but especially small businesses—by being more nimble and quickly react to the needs of the private sector working with the labs.

In the previous Congress, this House passed legislation I introduced with the gentleman from Colorado which would do a number of things to modernize the national laboratories, including the provision we have introduced as a standalone today.

In the 113th Congress, this House passed similar legislation without opposition.

I've had the opportunity to visit a number of our national laboratories, and the thing they all have in common is the unique expertise they house and the world-leading instruments they maintain.

They truly are the crown jewel in our research ecosystem, and this legislation would make it easier to access the labs for the general public.

One of the primary issues I have heard about, with the public trying to work with our laboratories, is the time it takes for many agreements to be worked out, often taking months after laboratory approval before final sign-off from the department.

Make no mistake, I believe oversight of our national labs by the department is vital, and the labs must be aligned under the mission of the department, but I do believe there should be some level of trust given to the labs to enter into smaller agreements.

With this legislation, signature authority for cooperative research and development agreements, work-for-other agreements and other agreements determined appropriate by DOE, would be given to the labs so long as they totaled less than \$1 million.

With the increased reporting requirements for these agreements, I believe this strikes the proper balance for oversight with the department and the intentions of Congress in creating the government-owned, contractor-operated model of the national labs.

I am grateful for the secretary at our recent hearing signaling his willingness to work with this idea, and I believe it fits with the administration's priorities in removing red-tape where it is not needed and freeing the private sector up to innovate and bring new ideas to market.

So again, I thank the chairman, the gentleman from Colorado and all of my colleagues on the committee for their support, and I urge passage of this important legislation.

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