OPENING STATEMENT
THE HONORABLE RALPH HALL (R-TX)
Ranking Member, U.S. House Committee on Science and Technology
The Administration's FY 2011 Research and Development Budget Proposal
Wednesday, February 24, 2010
2318 Rayburn Office Building

Thank you Chairman Gordon for calling this hearing to review the Administration's FY 2011 Research and Development (R&D) Budget and related science and technology policy priorities.

Dr. Holdren, I would like to welcome you here today and thank you for your service as Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy. 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.

First of all, none of us here dispute the magnitude of importance that a robust federal research and development enterprise has on our economy, our national security, and our

ability to be globally competitive. As you know, doubling the funding in key areas of basic research most important to innovation and long-term economic competitiveness has long been a priority of this Committee. The President continues this commitment in the FY 2011 budget, but we also need to recognize that we are in a very different economy than we were when we originally set down this path with the America COMPETES Act. While being supportive of strong funding for basic research, I am concerned with where this budget is taking us and the ways the Administration is choosing to direct the American taxpayer's research dollars.

Let's start with NASA. I have never been more concerned for the future of America's human space flight program. The Administration's own Augustine panel recommended that a human space flight program worthy of a great nation would require a clear direction and adequate funding. Unfortunately,

this Administration proposes to eliminate billions of dollars from human space flight at a critical and precarious time by shifting funding to other areas of NASA. On the eve of the completion of the International Space Station and the retirement of the Space Shuttle, I cannot understand how the Administration can propose such radical policy changes without a clearly defined plan forward with measurable goals. This is a dangerous path that not only threatens our leadership and our highly skilled workforce, but also threatens the very existence of America's human space flight efforts, and the utilization of the International Space Station.

Next, the Administration's nonchalant response to the leaked emails from the Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia contradicts your commitment to scientific integrity. It was my hope that your concern would rise to the level of mine. The continued assertion that the emails do nothing

to undermine the veracity of the science presented by the IPCC give us further pause as to the ability to be objective in these matters. A long time ago scientific consensus found the world to be flat, but challenging that consensus provided us with the truth.

The Administration also has changed course in several other key areas, the direction of which places significant sums of taxpayer money in jeopardy. Your office announced the dissolution of the National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System or NPOESS (*N-pose*) program. This tri-agency project structure, including NASA, NOAA, and DoD, spent the last 16 years developing the next generation of weather satellites at a cost of more than 14 billion dollars. Although the way that the program was structured almost doomed it to fail, we are about a year away from finally launching the first satellite. Now OSTP decides to change the

program parameters by splitting the program. . With over 14 billion dollars of taxpayer funding already invested, this shift in program structure comes with no analysis or explanation as to whether it will be cost effective, lower the inherent risks, and deliver the project on time.

Similarly, the Administration announced the desire to formally withdraw, with prejudice, the license application for Yucca Mountain, effectively eliminating Yucca Mountain as an option for the permanent storage of nuclear waste. After 25 years of scientific and engineering analysis and at a cost of 10 billion dollars, the Administration provided no details as to the rationale, whether scientific, economic or other, for killing this option. With no alternative proposal provided, the Administration asks that we wait an additional two years for the results of a Blue-Ribbon panel just announced.

All of these examples illustrate a troubling pattern in the Administration's science policy decisions. These decisions should not only be based on sound science and sound economics, but should also consider the long term ramifications. I fear that the current decisions being made do not reflect these considerations. As the President's principal scientific advisor, your task is to ensure scientific integrity and prudent investment so as to provide sound science that is good for the entire Nation, not just this Administration.

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 have significant concerns with the present course.

Thank you again, for being with us, and I look forward to your testimony.