



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

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Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Committee Markup of the Solar Fuels Innovation Act

Chairman Smith: The first bill before us this afternoon, H.R. 5638, the *Solar Fuels Innovation Act*, gives statutory authority and direction to the Department of Energy's groundbreaking solar fuels research program. I thank our Energy Subcommittee Vice Chairman, Steve Knight, for introducing this legislation, which is the product of the Subcommittee's hearings, oversight, and outreach.

Research to create fuels from the sun, also known as artificial photosynthesis, and photosynthesis replication, relies heavily on the study of chemistry and materials science.

By prioritizing these areas of fundamental science, researchers can develop systems that can take energy from sunlight and create a range of chemical fuels.

This basic research could provide the scientific and technical underpinnings for the private sector to develop solar fuels systems that eliminate the problems of the intermittency of solar energy, and make it a reliable power source for chemical fuels production.

H.R. 5638 authorizes the Secretary of Energy to carry out a targeted basic research initiative on photochemistry, electrochemistry, biochemistry, and the materials science necessary to develop complex systems to convert sunlight into usable and storable fuels.

This legislation also provides the necessary statutory direction and accountability for translational research in solar fuels.

H.R. 5638 focuses the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) on early stage research that will not be undertaken by the private sector. DOE must focus on this kind of groundbreaking R&D while the private sector finds ways to deploy innovative technology in the energy market.

By directing DOE to conduct this research using existing funds in the Office of Science and EERE, the legislation also ensures the responsible use of limited tax dollars for basic research.

I encourage my colleagues to support this legislation.

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