COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH

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Statement of Research Subcommittee Chairman Larry Bucshon (R-Ind.)
Hearing on Scientific Integrity and Transparency

Chairman Bucshon: I want to welcome everyone to today's Research subcommittee hearing on the issue of scientific integrity and transparency.

An editorial in the March 29, 2012 edition of Nature magazine was entitled: "Must try harder: too many sloppy mistakes are creeping into scientific papers. Lab heads must look more rigorously at the data – and at themselves." I found this editorial particularly interesting because of my background as a cardiothoracic surgeon and my professional interest in medicine. The editorial goes on to cite a recent study by Glenn Begley and Lee Ellis which analyzes the low number of cancer-research studies that have been converted into clinical success, and concludes that "a major factor is the overall poor quality of published pre-clinical data." This is one of many similar studies that I have read.

The growing lack of scientific integrity and transparency has many causes but one thing is very clear: without open access to data, there can be neither integrity nor transparency from the conclusions reached by the scientific community. Furthermore, when there is no reliable access to data, the progress of science is impeded and leads to inefficiencies in the scientific discovery process. Important results cannot be verified, and confidence in scientific claims dwindles. The federal government is the main sponsor of basic science research, with over $140 billion spent in fiscal year 2013. The American scientific community has made enormous contributions in many scientific fields from federally sponsored research. I believe our nation's scientists will continue to develop the breakthrough discoveries and innovations of tomorrow. However, scientists receiving federal funding need to be accountable and responsible stewards of tax-payer resources. Hard-working Americans trust our scientists to be genuine and authentic in the way they conduct and share federally funded research.

The focus of this hearing will be on scientific research data funded by the federal government. There are key issues that data-sharing policies should address including: what is data, how it should be shared, when it should be shared, and what potential costs might result in making this data available to the research community. We want to maximize access to data while protecting personal privacy, avoid any negative impact on intellectual property rights and innovation, and preserve data without ridiculous cost or administrative burdens. In an attempt to begin addressing this issue, the Office of Science and Technology Policy released guidelines on February 22nd of this year that recognized the problem of data access. These guidelines, intended for federal science agencies, are to be followed when determining a policy for public access to scientific data in digital formats. As part of this hearing, I look forward to hearing the witness's opinions on these federal guidelines.

Our witnesses today offer input from a variety of scientific fields, as this problem is not exclusive to one scientific field, community, or discipline. I'd like to thank them for coming and taking time to offer their expertise. I'd also like to thank Ranking Member Lipinski and everyone else participating in today's hearing.

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