

**U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Subcommittee on Investigations & Oversight
Subcommittee on Energy and Environment**

Nuclear Energy Risk Management

Statement of Chairman Paul Broun, M.D.

I would first like to welcome our witnesses to today's hearing and express my sincere appreciation for their effort in joining us here. Risk Assessment and Risk Management associated with Nuclear Energy are important and timely topics for the Science Committee to address. This topic is clearly a priority for the Science Committee as two of our Subcommittees are here together today. While the effects and implications of the Japanese earthquake, tsunami, and resulting nuclear disaster are still being determined, it is an opportunity for us to reassess our nation's current safety posture here in this country. After Three Mile Island, Chernobyl, September 11th, and several other incidents, the United States regularly revisited the state of our nuclear power infrastructure. Today's hearing is yet another opportunity to evaluate whether we, as a nation, are doing everything we can to ensure that nuclear energy is a safe component of our energy supply. This includes evaluating the current research and development portfolio for reactor safety, spent fuel storage, and public health monitoring.

The Department of Energy was invited to this morning's hearing and would have been provided a valuable contribution to the hearing. Unfortunately, they were unable to provide a witness to appear today. DOE did provide written comments, but that does not substitute for actual appearing. Testifying is not a correspondence course. The Science Committee understands the many demands that agency officials have on their time, as Members of Congress have similar demands. Because of this, the Committee provided four weeks of notice, and did not request a specific individual, leaving that determination to DOE. Unfortunately, it seems as though the entire Department only has one individual they believe is qualified to speak to the issues we are addressing today – and he was otherwise engaged for multiple days. While I find this troubling in and of itself, what is more frustrating is that this has now become a trend with this Administration. The TSA refused to testify at a hearing earlier this year before the I&O Subcommittee, and two days ago EPA refused to testify before the Full Committee unless they could dictate the terms of their attendance.

Let me be clear, this Committee is willing to work with the Administration to reach mutual accommodations, but it will not allow it to obstruct our oversight efforts. We take our oversight responsibilities very seriously. This Administration's arrogance continues to undermine its claims of transparency and openness, particularly when they fail to be accountable to Congress and the American people. If the Administration is not willing to work with this Committee, we have several options that can compel their cooperation. Unfortunately, it appears we may have to exercise those options in the future.

For the witnesses that did appear today, I want to sincerely thank them for their cooperation. I look forward to their testimony, and will now recognize Ms. Edwards, the Ranking Member of the Investigations and Oversight Subcommittee for an Opening Statement.