

Opening Statement
Rep. Bob Inglis (R-SC), Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Environment
Committee on Science and Technology
New Roadmaps for Wind and Solar Research and Development

July 14, 2009

Good morning and thank you for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman.

South Carolina is suffering a great deal in this economic downturn. Our unemployment rate is at an all time high of 12.1%. Thankfully, General Electric's turbine facility is helping to cushion the impact in Greenville where about 1,500 engineers and 1,500 production employees are designing and building advanced gas and wind turbines. Doubling worldwide production of wind energy will generate \$100 billion in sales for the industry, so I'm very excited about improving the domestic wind energy industry.

The U.S. was an early leader in photovoltaic power, in large part due to our robust space technology industry. Government policy and strong market signals have since increased solar energy installation and manufacturing capacity in other nations, as we fall behind.

American companies are poised to reclaim leadership in renewable energy technology and revitalize our economy through innovation. Well focused research dollars can support long-term research to keep us ahead of the development curve, and can spur opportunity and growth in the private sector.

The renewable electricity industry faces a number of important research topics. Wind energy in particular will improve through wind forecasting capability, increased turbine efficiency, and reduced capital costs, all of which will make wind farms easier to site and cheaper to build and operate. Both wind and solar energy face a hurdle in terms of reliability; energy storage solutions that convert intermittent renewable capacity into a base load power source will be necessary to move beyond our dependence on fossil fuel energy.

Once we've addressed these obstacles, we're still left with an aging and inefficient electricity grid geared to centralized generation at conventional power plants. I'm glad we'll have a chance to address critical challenges in electricity delivery at our next Subcommittee hearing.

I'm looking forward to hearing from the witnesses about ways to reshape and properly focus our renewable energy research dollars. Thank you again for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman.

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