

Opening Statement
The Honorable Vernon J. Ehlers (R-MI), Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Research and Science Education
The Science of Science and Innovation Policy
Committee on Science and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
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Today, we will explore the current state of science and technology policy research, and the role it plays in informing our policy decisions. When Dr. John Marburger, then science advisor to President Bush, called for the establishment of a “science of science policy” (SoSP) in 2005, we embarked on a new journey into this emerging field of interdisciplinary research by establishing an interagency working group, the Science of Science and Innovation Policy (SciSIP) program at the National Science Foundation (NSF), and, most recently, the Science and Technology for America’s Reinvestment: Measuring the Effect of Research on Innovation, Competitiveness and Science (STAR METRICS) project. I hope this hearing will provide us with a detailed measurement of how far we have come on that journey, as well as an encouraging picture of the progress we have made.

I have spent many years on this committee working to strengthen U.S. innovation and science education, and I have been a long time advocate of increased federal funding for basic research. This funding produces the technological innovations that will keep America competitive in the global market, and it is essential for us to educate American workers in the skills needed for 21st-century jobs.

As with any program, sustained Congressional oversight is required to ensure the SoSP programs are effective, and that they progress in a timely and fiscally responsible manner. I am encouraged by efforts which seek to maximize our current investments in scientific research, and I believe it is very important that those R&D investments provide us with measurable returns. We must be mindful of that fact as Congress deliberates the best ways to use American taxpayer funds in this difficult economic climate. To that end, I am very interested in learning more about the progress and potential of the STAR METRICS program and its recently completed pilot project.

I look forward to learning more about the status of science affecting science policy and the advancements which have been made since 2005. I want to thank our panel of witnesses for being here today, for accommodating our last-second scheduling change, and I look forward to hearing their insights on this topic.