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Media Contacts: Zachary Kurz
(202) 225-6371

Statement of Energy Subcommittee Chairman Cynthia Lummis (R-Wyo.)
The Future of Nuclear Energy

Chairman Lummis: Good morning. I would like to welcome our witnesses to today's hearing. Today, we will look at the track record and road forward for research and development within DOE's Office of Nuclear Energy. We will also look at the progress of nuclear energy technology in the United States and the regulatory environment for licensing new reactors.

Nuclear power currently accounts for approximately 19% the United States' electricity generation and 60% of our emission-free electricity. And, my home state of Wyoming is the nation's largest producer of uranium. Nuclear energy is a reliable, resilient, and has safely powered America for decades.

But, fundamental questions about the future of this technology need to be answered:

- When will we see the commercialization of small modular reactors that can be deployed at off-grid locations?
- When will we see deployment of advanced reactors that can reach much higher levels of thermal efficiency, recycle nuclear waste, and serve as hybrid energy systems?
- What are the regulatory and market barriers slowing down progress of these technologies in the United States?

Nuclear energy was born in the United States. We have the best scientists and engineers in the world. Yet, we are not seeing the pace of commercial technology advancement that we would expect. At the same time, other countries including China are surging ahead.

We have to ask ourselves: is the United States going to remain a global leader in nuclear technology? These are the issues we intend to discuss today. I look forward to further discussion and again, I thank the witnesses for participating in today's hearing.

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