

COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND  
TECHNOLOGY**  
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



For Immediate Release  
May 13, 2015

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**Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)**  
*Nuclear Energy Innovation and the National Labs*

**Chairman Smith:** Today's hearing will examine opportunities for advances in nuclear fission and fusion energy technologies. We will hear from the associate laboratory director at Argonne National Lab, the home of the world's first reactor to demonstrate a sustainable fission chain reaction.

Argonne National Lab is responsible for foundational research and development in nuclear energy that has led to many operating reactors and reactor concepts that will be discussed today. These include the integral fast reactor and pyroprocessing. We will also hear from witnesses who represent private companies and a charitable organization, all of whom have invested in the development of advanced fission or fusion reactor designs.

Nuclear energy provides reliable, zero-emission power. This technology represents one of the most promising areas for growth and innovation to increase economic prosperity and lower the cost of electricity over time. This will help keep the United States globally competitive.

The Department of Energy's (DOE) national laboratories provide vital opportunities for the private sector to invest in innovative energy technologies. This includes its open-access user facilities, which are one-of-a-kind machines that allow researchers to investigate fundamental scientific questions.

These facilities enable a wide array of researchers from academia, defense, and the private sector to develop new technologies without favoring one type of design. This represents a better approach than simply picking winners and losers through energy subsidies.

DOE's labs also provide the fundamental research capabilities that lead to scientific publications or proprietary research. In this public-private partnership, private companies take on the risk for commercializing technology while the government enables researchers to conduct specialized research that would not be possible without federal support.

DOE's national labs keep America's best and brightest scientists working on groundbreaking research here in the United States instead of moving to research projects overseas. I am hopeful that today's hearing can demonstrate the importance of foundational research capabilities in the national labs that will lead to the next generation of nuclear energy technology.

Inevitably, and I hope sooner rather than later, all Americans will benefit from this research. Thank you Mr. Chairman and I yield back.

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