OPENING STATEMENT
Chairman Mo Brooks (R-AL)
Subcommittee on Research and Science Education
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Hearing on *Nanotechnology: Oversight of the National Nanotechnology Initiative and Priorities for the Future*

April 14, 2011

Good afternoon and welcome. Again, let me thank each of our witnesses for joining us today.

Nanotechnology represents a great deal of promise for the future of the U.S. economy, both in terms of leaps and bounds in the scientific knowledge base and in terms of potential products and employment opportunities as the technology continues to mature. Many believe it has the potential to be the next industrial revolution leading to significant social and economic impact. Nanotechnology is already prevalent in our lives; it is in sunscreens and cosmetics, batteries, stain-resistant clothing, eyeglasses, windshields, and sporting equipment. The development of nanomaterials that are stronger, lighter, and more durable may lead to better technology for items such as bulletproof vests and fuel efficient vehicles. (With gas prices soaring isn't that a welcome thought?) Advances in nanomedicine to diagnose and treat diseases as well as

deliver drugs with fewer side effects are literally just over the horizon; many are already in clinical trials (as we will hear today).

The National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI) is the U.S. government's effort to coordinate the nanotechnology research and development activities of the Federal agencies. While nanotechnology is not a new scientific field, it remains an emerging technology. It is my understanding that neither this Subcommittee, nor the full Committee for that matter, has held a hearing focused on the NNI since early 2008, primarily because the House passed an NNI reauthorization bill in both the 110th and 111th Congresses, only to see it die in the Senate. Regardless, much has happened in the past three years, including a new PCAST Assessment and the issuance of a Strategic Plan. This hearing today provides us with an opportunity to get feedback on those documents and have a discussion about national priorities for this technology.

In addition, we will also examine the President's fiscal year 2012 NNI budget supplement, which represents funding requests from the 15 federal agencies investing in nanotechnology. The request includes over a 200 million dollar (11 percent) increase from FY10 enacted levels, including significant increases for environmental, health and safety areas, and nano-manufacturing. In these difficult budget times, Congress needs to be sure

that all Federal investments will work to strengthen the economy, including our investments in nanotechnology.

I look forward to hearing the testimony to be presented today and to the beginning of what I hope is a fruitful discussion on U.S. nanotechnology investments and priorities.

Again, thank you for joining us today.