



Opening Statement
Oversight Hearing on State of Innovation
Chairman Lisa Murkowski
February 7, 2019

Good morning, everyone. The Committee will come to order.

It's been a busy week for us at the Energy Committee with our lands bill that is currently on the Floor, we had a business meeting a couple days ago, and now we're here our second full committee hearing. So we welcome those of you to the panel this morning.

On Tuesday, we heard from those in the energy and minerals market, an overview looking at the current trends. Today we're going to look at what is happening to drive the energy trends of the future, what could be the next breakthrough energy technology – we use the term breakthrough a lot, let's try to define that this morning. We're also looking to how we can encourage innovation that will deliver better, cleaner, and cheaper energy for American families and businesses.

Here in the United States we've long been on the cutting edge of energy innovation. Whether the battle for electric current supremacy between Nikola Tesla and Thomas Edison, the invention of the semiconductor, or the revolution in hydraulic fracturing, American ingenuity has led the way in global innovation. But, we want to continue to lead the way in global innovation.

Underpinning all of these efforts is strong support for the basic sciences and the people who dedicate their lives to furthering scientific pursuits. The Department of Energy plays an outsized role in pushing the limits of basic science, furthering discovery, and finding the breakthroughs that can change our energy future. And, they further leverage this by partnering with private industry and the great researchers at our nation's universities.

Our role here in the Congress is to help foster an environment that encourages that innovation. Last Congress, we enacted a number of important innovation policies into law – ones that promoted a National Quantum Initiative, advanced nuclear energy, and energy efficiency. But looking forward, we also know that the energy challenges facing us here in the United States and the world will require bigger, bolder, better, brighter, faster, smarter ideas.

I have often spoken about clean energy innovation policies as no-regret solutions. But in reality, these are just those first steps. It is time to push hard to bring down the cost of clean energy technologies like renewables, advanced nuclear, next-generation energy storage, and carbon capture. If we want credible technological solutions that are cost effective and deployable globally and at-scale, we must ensure that the policies we put in place propel those efforts.

I'm pleased to welcome a very distinguished panel of witnesses that we have before us. From the Department of Energy, we have Under Secretary for Science Paul Dabbar – thank you for

being here and for the work you are doing to further the basic science research and innovation at the Department.

Next, we have someone who is truly a friend of the committee, we have seen him in different capacities here, Secretary Moniz, former Secretary of Energy, we welcome you back to the committee and appreciate the insight that you will provide and what you will be able to share with us with this recent report that was out – it was a pleasure to be able to visit with you and Mr. Yergin yesterday to get some of the low down there, so thank you and welcome to the committee.

Jay Faison is with us this morning, with ClearPath. Jay has been a real leader in so many of these clean energy solutions and how we advance those benefits, so it's good to have you back with us.

From the Council on Competitiveness, we welcome back its President and CEO, Deborah Wince-Smith. It's good to have you here.

Jason Grumet has, again, also been before the committee many times and is a good, strong voice on many of these issues, and is the President of the Bipartisan Policy Center.

And then finally, from the fantastic “little state” – Senator Manchin is always saying, ‘my little state of West Virginia,’ so it's good to have you here, Mr. Wood, who is the Interim Director of the West Virginia University Energy Institute. So it's a pleasure to have you here this morning.

With that, I turn to my Ranking Member for any comments that you might have.

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