

Thursday, August 5 2021

Chairman Joe Manchin's Opening Statement

- The Committee will come to order.
- Although the news coverage would indicate that this week is Infrastructure Week, our Committee seems determined to make it Science Week.
- On Tuesday, we held a nomination hearing featuring two nominees at the heart of the mission of the Department of Energy: the Under Secretary for Science and Energy and the Director of the Office of Science.
- And we're here today to discuss the role of - and programs within - the Office of Science.
- I hope our witnesses will expand on Tuesday's discussion of the Office of Science's leadership, management, and direction by delving deeper into the substance of its many programs.
- The Office of Science carries out the basic scientific research that underpins nearly all of the Department's activities – from understanding the atom to the cosmos and from manufactured materials to biological systems.
- At the core of the Office of Science's abilities to perform are the ten National Labs stewarded by the Office and its 28 user facilities.
- The user facilities, such as Berkeley's Advanced Light Source in California or Michigan's Facility for Rare Isotope Beams, are examples of what the United States does at its very best:

- These unique and expansive research facilities surpass the investment that any one institution could muster on its own and provide shared access to world class instruments to researchers around the world based on the scientific merit of their projects.
- The Office of Science's user facilities offer a platform for discovery but also one to bring together researchers from different backgrounds and with different approaches.
- It turns out that collaboration is as vital to scientific pursuits as it is to legislative ones.
- In the past eight months, the Senate has passed the Energy Act of 2020, several COVID packages, the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act of 2021, and is now considering infrastructure legislation.
- And in all of these measures, scientific research is an integral part of the debate.
- That has included creating new programs, such as the Energy Act's fusion energy provisions, or ensuring that our R&D efforts can strengthen our competitiveness or aid our COVID response.
- At the same time, our Committee has become aware of both the need to advance the Office of Science's programmatic mission as well as address deferred maintenance issues. We also need to invest in new infrastructure and equipment at the National Labs and elsewhere.
- I look forward to this hearing's discussion about where this Committee needs to act to support and achieve our vision for the Office of Science going forward.
- Today's witnesses bring together the major perspectives on basic research:

- Dr. Steve Binkley, the Acting Director of the Department of Energy's Office of Science;
- Dr. Thomas Zacharia, the Director of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, the largest of the Office of Science's laboratories;
and
- Dr. Edward Seidel, the President of the University of Wyoming.
- I look forward to discussing the full range of the Office of Science's work, including with the National Laboratories and its university partners today.
- With that, I turn to my friend and Ranking Member, Senator Barrasso, for his opening remarks.