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The House Committee on Science, Space and Technology's Subcommittee on Energy held a hearing to discuss emerging energy technologies in the United States. Subcommittee Chairman Randy Weber (R-TX) and full Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX) led the meeting alongside Subcommittee Ranking Member Alan Grayson (D-FL). Testimony was provided by a panel of four witnesses who spoke about the role solar fuels, energy storage and quantum materials may play in the country's energy future. All introductory remarks by those who led the meeting underscored the importance of government funding for basic research. Chairman Weber emphasized that the Department of Energy needs to prioritize basic research over grants for technology already suitable for industry, and Ranking Member Grayson asked why there was a lack of effort in the private sector to create artificial fuels.

Representatives from both parties, including Reps. Marc Veasey (D-TX) and Stephen Knight (R-CA) were concerned about the large areas of land used for renewable technologies, such as wind farms, relative to the small amounts of energy capable of being stored for later use. Witnesses explained current and emerging technologies, such as redox flow batteries and multivalent ion batteries, to address storage.

One of Rep. Mo Brooks' (R-AL) primary interests was the status of the U.S. relative to international competitors in the research of artificial photosynthesis, synchrotron light sources and high temperature superconductors. Likewise, Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-IL), a proponent of laboratory facility upgrades, inquired how these upgrades would give the U.S. an advantage.

All panelists agreed that increased government research support is necessary for the U.S. to maintain international leadership, and to facilitate the transition of these technologies from basic research to industry.

Sources: California Institute of Technology, Office of Science, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, Berkeley Lab, Energy Storage Association
