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## Providing the Tools for Scientific Discovery and Basic Energy Research: The Department of Energy Science Mission

### **Witnesses (with links to opening statements):**

Dr. Pat Dehmer, Deputy Director for Science Programs, Office of Science, Department of Energy

Dr. Horst Simon, Deputy Director, Lawrence Berkeley National Lab

Dr. John Hemminger, Chairman, Basic Energy Sciences Advisory Committee, Department of Energy

### **Committee Members (with links to opening statements):**

Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) Subcommittee Chairman

Eric Swalwell (D-CA) Ranking Member

Lamar Smith (R-TX) Committee Chairman

Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX) Ranking Member Chairman

Randy Hultgren (R-IL)

Daniel Lipinski (D-IL)

Mark Takano (D-CA)

On October 30, the House Science, Space and Technology Committee's Subcommittee on Energy held a hearing entitled, "Providing the Tools for Scientific Discovery and Basic Energy Research: The Department of Energy Science Mission." The hearing addressed the challenges and opportunities in reauthorizing the America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education and Science Act (COMPETES Act).

Historically the COMPETES Act has met with bipartisan support, providing investment in innovation through research and development to increase U.S. competitiveness. However, Republicans are now proposing to replace it with the EINSTEIN (Enabling Innovation for Science, Technology and Energy in) America Act, which prioritizes funding for the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science and defunds a number of programs.

Full Committee Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX) advocated for the EINSTEIN America Act, emphasizing that it is just one of the proposed alternatives to the America COMPETES Act, and that it will focus funds on basic science, enabling taxpayer money to be used more efficiently. However, the proposed draft of the EINSTEIN America Act would cut funding for applied science at the DOE Office of Science, including cutting funding for the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E), a cornerstone of COMPETES, which promotes research and development of advanced energy technologies.

The America COMPETES Act was passed in 2007, and reauthorized in 2010. The act authorized budgets for the DOE's Office of Science, the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Furthermore, COMPETES provided for programs like ARPA-E and the EPSCoR (Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research) program, which enhances the capabilities of designated states to conduct sustainable and competitive energy related research. Currently, EPSCoR is helping to fund research in 25 states that historically have not received a high number of NSF grants.

Although these programs have enhanced science, technology, and innovation enterprise within their respective states, the U.S. has fallen behind international competitors in investments in research and development due to the sequester and budget shortfalls.

Eric Swalwell (D-CA), whose district includes both Lawrence Livermore and Sandia National Laboratories, expressed major concern with the EINSTEIN America Act, indicating that it undercuts funding, creates more uncertainty for institutions that rely on federal funding, and hurts the reputation of the U.S. as a leader in science and technology. Swalwell also criticized the EINSTEIN Act for deprioritizing climate change research. Another concern for Swalwell and Democrats on the committee is that the bill as is only provides authorization of funding for two years; they argue that a minimum of five years is needed.

Witnesses agreed that the unpredictability and lack of funding is hurting their research and making it especially hard to plan for personnel. Witness Dr. John Hemminger, Chairman of the Basic Energy Sciences Advisory Committee, expressed his concern that the unstable funding is creating an innovation deficit. Similarly, Dr. Horst Simon, Deputy Director of Lawrence Berkeley National Lab, explained that the trend of sequestration and shutdown is creating uncertainty and signaling to the next generation of scientists that there is no guarantee that the integrity of funding will last.

It is unclear whether the parties will be able to find a compromise anytime soon. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation will hold a hearing on November 6, 2013 to begin working on reauthorizing the America COMPETES Act. Opening statements, witness testimonies, and an archived webcast of the hearing can be found on the Committee's web site.

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