

U.S. House of Representatives
Science, Space, and Technology Committee
Roundtable on DOE Underground Particle Physics

September 28, 2011

OPENING REMARKS

Representative Randy Hultgren

I want to welcome everyone to this morning's roundtable of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology on Department of Energy Underground Particle Physics activities.

I will be brief in my opening remarks because we have limited time and there is much to discuss. First of all, I want to thank all of you for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here, and particularly thank Dr. Oddone for hosting all of us here at Fermi and Dr. Brinkman for arranging yesterday's tour of the lab and being here this morning on behalf of the Administration.

It is not often that Congress takes time to explore issues such as neutrinos and dark matter—"almost never" might even be an understatement. But we hope to change that a little bit today.

We're here because the Federal government, and DOE in particular, face very difficult budget and policy decisions in the coming months regarding the fate of underground particle physics in America. This decision will weigh heavily on not only on the long-term future of American physics research, but also on the short- and medium-term outlook for Fermilab and its world-class team of scientists and engineers.

The need for this research effort is well-established. As those here know well, numerous high level scientific and agency advisory panels have recommended the U.S. establish a new underground facility to support high energy physics research. In July, the National Research Council said such a facility is of "paramount scientific importance."

The challenge going forward is to find a way to do this within the reality of the current budget environment. All government agencies are facing similar challenges. We must prioritize and make difficult decisions that involve budgetary and scientific tradeoffs. In my opinion, this is exactly the type of research that *should* receive top priority from the government—cutting edge basic research and discovery science that will lead to major breakthroughs in our understanding of the world.

It is important that we get it right, and that is the primary impetus for this roundtable today—to provide an opportunity for both Congress and the Administration to hear directly from the scientists that have worked so hard to guide planning and development of these projects over the years.

With that in mind, let me make two administrative notes. First, we have a large group of participants and very limited time, so we would ask that everyone be as brief as possible. In addition to any opening remarks from Representative Biggert and Dr. Oddone, we will hear from 6 speakers and an additional 6 discussants. If everyone could keep their remarks to no more than 5 minutes and preferably a bit shorter that would maximize time for follow-up Q&A and discussion. To help keep us on track, staff will hold up a yellow-card at the 4-minute mark of each speaker to notice that remarks should be brought to a conclusion and a red card at the 5-minute mark.

Second, I want everyone to know that this event is being transcribed, and will be made available to Members of the Science Committee that could not be with us and to staff as a resource going forward.

Again I want to thank everyone for being here. Now I'd like to welcome any opening remarks from Representative Biggert.