

OPENING STATEMENT

The Honorable Mo Brooks (R-AL), Chairman
Subcommittee on Research and Science Education
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
*NSF Major Multi-User Research Facilities Management:
Ensuring Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability*

April 18, 2012

Good morning and welcome. We are pleased to have all of our witnesses joining us this morning to continue our discussion concerning oversight of NSF's multi-user equipment and facilities. I look to my colleague, Mr. Lipinski, and my fellow Subcommittee Members on both sides of the aisle to work with me continue to ensure the Subcommittee performs its legislative, oversight, and investigative duties with due diligence on matters within its jurisdiction throughout the 112th Congress and, as always, appreciate their valued experience and insights.

As mentioned in our last hearing, investments in major multi-user research facilities comprise approximately 15 percent of NSF's portfolio. The total FY13 NSF budget request for major multi-user research facilities is \$1.1 billion. Of that amount, \$196 million is requested for the MREFC line item and \$923 million is requested for the Research and Related Activities (RRA) line item. We looked primarily at the MREFC account in our last hearing. This hearing will focus more on the RRA funding side as those funds support the operations and maintenance of existing facilities, Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDCs), and planning and development activities.

Major multi-user facilities can include telescopes, accelerators, distributed instrumentation networks and arrays, and research vessels. This research infrastructure has a significant impact on large segments of the science and engineering population. We in Congress need to ensure the planning, operations, management and overall stewardship of these projects is being carried out responsibly and in the best interest of the American taxpayer.

The National Science Board and NSF are currently involved in examining the process of recompetition for these major multi-user facilities in order to "assure the best use of NSF funds for supporting research and education." Our hearing today will look at the way these facilities are run and managed as well as the issue of recompetition.

I am eager to hear more about how these important facilities are managed, including recompetition practices, and to discuss how we in Congress can continue to support these worthwhile endeavors while ensuring fiscal responsibility.