

**Opening Statement – Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**  
Ranking Member, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology  
*Strengthening Transparency and Accountability within the Environmental Protection Agency*  
November 14, 2013

Good morning. I am very pleased to welcome Administrator McCarthy to today's hearing. She had a distinguished record at the Environmental Protection Agency prior to her being selected to be EPA Administrator, and by all accounts she has been doing an exemplary job since assuming that position.

While I think her record of performance and her integrity speak for themselves, I thought it important to review the mission.

First the mission of the EPA is to "*protect human health and the environment.*" As someone who worked in public health before I entered politics, I can think of no mission of the federal government that is more important or noble than that. As a Member of Congress I think I should be doing all that I can to encourage EPA as it attempts to carry out a very challenging mission. I think, too often EPA is made a target for funding cuts and its leadership subjected to harassment and denigration. Unfortunately, our own Committee has not been immune from employing such tactics.

Mr. Chairman, I am a Texan from birth to death, and I'm no stranger to the oil and gas industries and the economic benefits they can bring—or to the pollution and health and environmental impacts those industries can also bring. I know that EPA's actions have consequences for companies that sometimes are negative. However, I also know that EPA's actions have important consequences for the health of our constituents—especially those who are young, infirm, or elderly. And those consequences have been very positive indeed over the forty-odd years that EPA has been in existence. We all want a healthy economy, but we also want a healthy quality of life for our citizenry—and EPA's efforts have played a critical role in achieving both those goals since its inception.

As Members of Congress, I think we should be strive to educate our constituents, not scare them. I hope today I can resist the temptation to try for provocative "sound bites" for my district, and instead use today's hearing to better understand what EPA has been tasked to accomplish, how it is doing on those tasks, and how we in Congress can help it to do its job more effectively.

Administrator McCarthy, I know you have a very tough job, and I want to commend you for your willingness to take it on in spite of all the hurdles that you and your agency face. I look forward to your testimony, and I look forward to working with you to help EPA achieve the goals that the nation has asked us to carry out.