COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
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Statement of Energy Subcommittee Chairman Cynthia Lummis (R-Wyo.)
Hearing on the P5: The U.S. Vision for Particle Physics After Discovery of the Higgs Boson

Chairman Lummis: I would like to welcome everyone to today's hearing on the status of particle physics research in the United States. Today, the Energy Subcommittee will discuss a strategic plan for U.S. particle physics in the global context offered by the Particle Physics Project Prioritization Panel, also known as the "P5."

Researchers in particle physics seek to unveil the fundamental components of existence in an effort to better understand the interrelationship between space, matter, and time. The field has been highly successful - recently yielding discoveries of the heaviest elementary particle (the top quark), the tiny masses of neutrinos, the accelerated expansion of the Universe, and the Higgs boson.
The P5 plan reflects approximately one year of deliberation to reach consensus throughout the particle physics community regarding the best opportunities for the United States to maintain global significance in this scientific discipline while considering three potential budget scenarios.

While the U.S. remains in a state of fiscal uncertainty, reducing overall federal spending in order to arrive at a balanced budget should be a top priority. Yet during this process, we cannot overlook the fact that the federal government plays a critical role when it comes to the nation's long-term competitiveness in the physical sciences. As noted in the P5 report, "the countries that lead these activities attract the top minds and talent from around the world, inspire the next generation of scientists and technologists, and host international teams dedicated to a common purpose." In particle physics, the U.S. is already slipping and stands to lose its position of global significance if we do not act boldly.

Basic research, such as that which is funded through the Office of Science's High Energy Physics (HEP) program, is a proper use of taxpayer funds. As the authorizing Committee of the House, we are responsible to ensure that the HEP program uses its limited funds prudently. I say this to underscore the importance of the P5, which had to make difficult choices, but found a way to achieve consensus in this very competitive area of cutting-edge science and provide the U.S. particle physics program with a road map for success.

To the witnesses, I convey my admiration for your hard work -- for those who took part in the P5 directly and those who carry out this unique research that we will learn more about today. I want to thank the witnesses for participating in today's hearing and look forward to their testimony.