COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH

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Statement of Energy Subcommittee Chairman Randy Weber (R-Texas)
Department of Energy Oversight: Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Chairman Weber: Good morning and welcome to today's Energy Subcommittee hearing examining the Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, or EERE. Today, we will hear from the Department and a broad panel of expert witnesses on the value of the research, development, demonstration and commercialization activities in EERE, and the impact DOE's clean energy programs have on the energy market and the U.S. economy.

EERE is the lead federal agency for clean energy research and development, with programs in transportation, renewable energy, and energy efficiency. This office is clearly a top priority for the Obama Administration, with this year's budget request coming in at $2.7 billion, an increase of over $800 million from enacted levels. That's a whopping 42 percent increase in one year.
With our national debt at $18 trillion and rising, and mandatory spending caps guiding budgets on everything from energy to national defense, this kind of spending deserves rigorous oversight from Congress.

It is clear that EERE's budget is simply unaffordable. While every other federal program has had to adjust to spending caps and work within modest spending goals, EERE's budget has continued to increase. Despite a budget that has already grown by 58% in the last decade, and received over $16 billion in stimulus funds, the Obama Administration continues to request more year after year. It's time to adjust EERE's budget to reality.

By continuing to grow EERE spending, the Department of Energy's approach to energy research and development has also become more and more unbalanced. EERE's budget dwarfs that of the other applied offices at DOE. The $2.7 billion budget request for Fiscal Year 2016 is more than four times the budget request for fossil energy R&D, five times the request for nuclear energy R&D, and 16 times the request for electricity and energy reliability R&D. In fact, the proposed budget for EERE is more than double the budgets for Nuclear, Fossil, and Electricity R&D combined.

Finally, the work prioritized by EERE is far too focused on increasing the use of today's technology, not conducting the fundamental research to lay the foundation for the next technology breakthrough. Many EERE programs are focused on reducing market barriers for existing technology or funding R&D activities already prioritized by the private sector.

For example, in EERE's Vehicle Technologies program, $40 million is requested for "cost-share projects with industry" within the "SuperTruck 2" initiative. Funding for SuperTruck 2 is intended to improve the hauling efficiency of heavy-duty, Class 8 long-haul vehicles by 100% by 2020. But the freight industry and auto manufacturers – both billion dollar industries – already have the means and

motivation to develop innovative technology to increase energy efficiency. Investing in technology to decrease costs is just good business sense – and American industry does this every day, with or without federal funds.

Instead of duplicating work that could be done in the private sector, the Department should prioritize basic research and development with broad application to all forms of energy, and energy efficiency. Models developed in the Office of Science's ASCR program – the subject of an Energy Subcommittee hearing earlier this year – can be used to study and improve techniques in manufacturing, renewable power, and energy efficiency, enabling the private sector to develop and bring new technology into the market without American tax dollars.

I want to thank Assistant Secretary Danielson and all our witnesses for testifying to the Committee today, and I look forward to a review of EERE's programs and a discussion about the impact DOE's clean energy programs have on the economy.

As some of our witnesses will point out today, subsidizing one form of energy over another through federal programs is damaging to the energy market, increases costs for the American people, and is often counterproductive to new technology development.

Investment in the next generation of energy technology must be balanced, technology-neutral, and responsible. By funding basic research and development, the Department of Energy could build a foundation for the private sector to bring innovative new technologies to market, and grow the American economy.

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