COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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Statement of Research and Technology Subcommittee Chairwoman Barbara Comstock (R-Va.)

The Future of Biotechnology: Solutions for Energy, Agriculture and Manufacturing

Chairwoman Comstock: Humans have used biotechnology since the dawn of civilization, manipulating biology to improve plants and animals through hybridization and other methods.

Rapid advancements in scientific knowledge and technology throughout the 20th Century, gave rise to the field of modern biotechnology– making useful products to meet human needs and demands. Biotechnology has become part of our everyday lives, from producing the insulin used by diabetics, to the corn we eat and use to produce fuel, to the detergent that cleans our clothes.

Today, we are here to discuss what the future of biotechnology will look like in this century, specifically for solving some of our greatest challenges in energy, agriculture and manufacturing.

In June, the Subcommittee held a hearing on the *Science and Ethics of Genetically Engineered Human DNA*. The hearing looked at the research and issues surrounding the application of new gene editing technologies for human health. I hope that today's hearing will build upon that fascinating discussion, and help inform a research and regulatory framework that continues to ensure safety without stifling innovation.

The biotechnology and biological science industry is a sizable and growing economic driver in the United States. In Virginia, the industry employs over 26,000 people a cross 1,500 companies and institutions. Including the George Washington University Ashburn Campus Computational Biology Institute, located in my district. Here they apply technology tools to a variety of funded research in pediatric medicine, coronary heart disease, cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and schizophrenia, to name a few.

These are good paying jobs – and I want to find ways to keep those jobs in the United States and encourage young people to study the STEM subjects needed to fill those jobs and create new ones.

I look forward to learning more about these new and emerging technologies and their applications, understand better the role of the federal government in funding and

regulating biotechnology, and hear from the witnesses about the economic benefits to the United States.

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