

OPENING STATEMENT
The Honorable Ralph M. Hall (R-TX), Chairman
U.S. House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
The Office of Science and Technology Policy:
Examining Priorities and Effectiveness of the Nation's Science Policies

June 20, 2012

Dr. Holdren, thank you for joining us today. In your dual role as the President's Science Advisor and as Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, you have the President's ear, and as such, you have a real, far-reaching influence on this Administration's direction in science and technology.

We may not always agree with the advice the Director provides to the President, but science and technology have played a vital role in the making of this Nation and will continue to fulfill that role in the future. As such, I doubt you would find anyone here who would challenge the need for science and technology advice in any White House. Throughout U.S. history, that advice has come through both informal and formal methods.

The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) that we know today is a result of the National Science and Technology Policy, Organization, and Priorities Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-282), which formally created both the Office and established the roles of the Director. The House Committee on Science and Technology was instrumental in the passage of this Act, and it is our responsibility to make sure that the Office continues to function in a way that is beneficial to American citizens. While Directors historically have joined us annually to review the Administration's Budget Request and have appeared before us on specific issues from time to time, this is the first time this Committee has met to focus primarily on oversight of OSTP since it was created in statute.

In addition to reviewing OSTP's responsibilities, operations, and management, we will also look at its function in shaping our Nation's policies. It should come as no surprise that I remain concerned about a number of this Administration's science and technology policy issues, ranging from an unprecedented emphasis on clean energy at the expense of other priorities to a larger focus on applied research at the expense of basic scientific research to the lack of a clearly defined and compelling long-term mission for human space flight. Further, there are other areas still awaiting action from OSTP and the Administration. These include transparency and data access issues, a position on the transfer of the Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS) from NOAA to NASA, a position statement on INKSNA, and a Strategic Plan for STEM Education.

Dr. Holdren, I know you take your role seriously, and as the House Committee responsible for Science, Space, and Technology, we also take our oversight role seriously. Today, we look forward to receiving your testimony and learning about the current organization and priorities of OSTP and the Administration as part of this Committee's oversight responsibilities.