**OPENING STATEMENT**
**The Honorable Mo Brooks (R-AL), Chairman**
Subcommittee on Research and Science Education
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
Hearing on *NSF Major Research Equipment and Facilities Management: Ensuring Fiscal Responsibility and Accountability*

March 8, 2012

Good morning and welcome. I am pleased to welcome all of our witnesses to discuss the oversight of NSF's major research equipment and facilities management from basic concept design through post-construction operations and maintenance.

I look to my colleague, Mr. Lipinski, and my fellow Subcommittee Members on both sides of the aisle to work with me to continue to ensure the Subcommittee performs its legislative, oversight, and investigative duties with due diligence on matters within its jurisdiction throughout the 112th Congress and appreciate their valued experience and insights.

Investments in various multi-user research facilities such as vessels, astronomical observatories, particle accelerators, the U.S. Antarctic stations, seismic observatories, and many others comprise approximately 15 percent of NSF's portfolio. Additional components of the infrastructure portfolio include large datasets based on NSF-supported surveys, the provision of shared-use equipment for academic researchers, and interdisciplinary centers.

Under the Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC) account, large multi-year projects are funded that would be too expensive for a specific Directorate to take up on its own. MREFC projects focus solely on the construction of major equipment and facilities. The science driving the projects and the operations and maintenance once construction is completed are funded from separate NSF budget accounts.

Over the last ten years NSF has worked to establish and refine the practices for launching new MREFC projects, overseeing construction, and the transition to managing the operations and maintenance of the equipment and facilities. These practices have lead to greater involvement by the National Science Board and a clear understanding of how MREFC projects are prioritized in difficult economic times.

While these major equipment and facilities support NSF's larger goal of ensuring the United States maintains its competitive edge in science by promoting global leadership in advancing research, education and innovation, it is imperative that appropriate oversight be executed to guarantee the greatest return on taxpayer investments.

I have said this before and will echo the sentiment again today - America faces unsustainable budget deficits that constitute our greatest economic and national security threat. This leaves absolutely no room for government waste – even within America's most prized programs and facilities.
I look forward to learning more about what I, and my colleagues on the Research and Science Education Subcommittee, can do to pave a more responsible path for America's future by way of supporting these important endeavors.