



## Committee Marks Start of 50th Anniversary Year With a Visit From Bill Gates

As this year marks the Committee's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the body will be holding a series of hearings to address the country's past scientific achievements and future challenges.

This series of hearings kicked off on [March 12](#), when Committee Members reviewed the domestic technological achievements of the past 50 years and analyzed future opportunities. At the hearing, Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates discussed technology's changing role in our society and the steps needed to maintain and strengthen America's competitive edge.



[Chairman Gordon and Mr. Gates discussing American achievements prior to the hearing.](#)

"During the last 50 years, the world has witnessed truly revolutionary advances in science and technology. We as a nation can take pride in knowing that American scientists, researchers, and entrepreneurs have been at the forefront of many of these advances," said **Mr. Gates**. "This Committee can also take pride in knowing that it is directly responsible for many of the key federal policies that provided the foundation for U.S. technology leadership."

[Read more about the hearing with Bill Gates >>](#)

[Read more about the Committee's History and 50th Anniversary >>](#)

## Members Examine Efforts to Commercialize Nanotechnology for Public Benefit

The Committee has held a series of hearings as part of their effort to reauthorize the National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI). The latest hearing on [March 11](#) further examined how effectively NNI's research and activities are enhancing commercial products. Members questioned witnesses on the relevance and effectiveness of NNI's nanomanufacturing research in meeting industry needs.

Nanotechnology advancements continue to grow and are expected to offer benefits to a variety of industries. Although Committee Members understand the unique challenges and complexities involved in the commercialization of nanotechnology, they continue to urge more investment in basic research. Committee Members strongly support the U.S.'s goal of being the global leader in nanomanufacturing.

[Read more about this hearing >>](#)

## MARCH 2008 E-NEWS



Committee Members attended a shuttle launch at NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida on March 11, 2008.

## Newsletter Spotlight

Welcome to the March 2008 edition of the [House Committee on Science and Technology's E-Newsletter](#).

As always, the Committee appreciates your interest in our work. Please feel free to share Science & Tech E-News with friends and colleagues. They can also [sign up](#) to receive E-News in their own mailboxes quickly and easily.

Sincerely,

Bart Gordon, Chairman,  
House Committee on  
Science & Technology

## Additional March Agenda Items/Hearings

[Mar. 5, 2008](#) — *The Department of Energy Fiscal Year 2009 Research and Development Budget Proposal*

[Mar. 6, 2008](#) — *The Department of Homeland Security's R&D Budget Priorities for Fiscal Year 2009*

[Mar. 11, 2008](#) — *NIST's Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Request: What Are the Right Technology Investments to Promote U.S. Innovation and Competitiveness?*

[Mar. 13, 2008](#) — *NASA's Science Programs: Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Request and Issues*

## Committee Investigates the Closure of EPA Libraries

In 2006, EPA began a process that would close physical access to four of its regional libraries. In the same period, five other libraries in the network either reduced hours or services. In addition, EPA closed its Chemical Library in Washington, DC, which is used extensively in enforcement cases. Altogether, access to EPA libraries in 23 states has been completely lost, and several specialized collections have been shuttered, including EPA's headquarters library.

"The EPA ignored their own careful plans and abruptly closed libraries, limited access to the public and EPA employees, and just threw away documents that may be irreplaceable," stated **Subcommittee Chairman Brad Miller**. "The EPA's ability to protect the environment and public health is badly compromised as a result."



Subcommittee Chairman Miller questioning witnesses regarding the process EPA implemented in closing the libraries.

Over a year ago, **Chairman Gordon** and fellow Members asked the GAO to investigate the EPA library closures. On March 13, the Committee held a hearing to further review the library closures and release the GAO report. GAO reported the library closures were unjustified and found the EPA's method of closing them to be extremely flawed. The GAO recommended the EPA create a new system for disposing of materials and improve their outreach and oversight before taking any further action.

[Read more about the EPA Library Closures >>](#)

[Read the GAO report on EPA Library Closures >>](#)

## Members Hold Field Hearings on a Variety of Topics

On February 29, **Subcommittee Chairman Nick Lampson** held a field hearing in Texas to explore how the energy industry, and in particular cities such as Houston, are working to address energy challenges. Members questioned witnesses about the affects of global climate change, rapid economic growth, as well as energy supply and security issues.

On March 17, **Subcommittee Vice-Chairwoman Gabrielle Giffords** discussed the obstacles and opportunities of solar power at a field hearing in Tucson, Arizona. At the hearing, witnesses explained the potential for making solar energy a significant source of electronic generating capacity in the United States.

In addition to these hearings, Subcommittee Chairman Mark Udall will hold a field hearing on the applications and benefits of Remote Sensing Data in Colorado Springs, Colorado on April 7, 2008.

[Read more about the Houston field hearing >>](#)

[Read more about the Tucson field hearing >>](#)

[Listen to Rep. Giffords discuss solar power on NPR's Science Friday >>](#)

## Looking Ahead...

In the beginning of April, the Committee will examine toxic trailers housing Katrina victims, international science, and NASA's exploration initiative. In addition, the Committee will continue to look at offshoring of U.S. jobs and review the opportunities and challenges of nuclear power.

Visit the [Committee's website](#) for the dates, times, and locations of these upcoming events.

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