



**Opening Statement of Chairman Scott Tipton  
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Energy and Trade  
“Small Business Innovators: On the Cutting Edge of Energy Solutions”  
April 26, 2012**

Good morning and thank you for joining us. The hearing will now come to order. I want to thank each of our witnesses for being with us today and taking time from their busy schedules. We look forward to your testimony.

Today, we are going to examine innovative ways small businesses contribute to energy production. Specifically, we’re going to look at advanced biofuels, such as cellulosic ethanol, and new innovative technologies small companies have developed to produce energy from previously unused materials. We are also going to look at the role of research and development in spurring innovative technology.

Today’s topic is one of significant importance for our nation. As we all know, energy is critical to our economy. Economic prosperity in the United States is closely tied to the availability of reliable and affordable supplies of energy. This is not a new issue. The way we discuss it, however, has changed.

In recent years, we have seen energy prices skyrocket. You only need to look at the sign at your local service station when you fill your gas tank, or read the bottom line on your home heating fuel bill to see how much more we are paying for energy now compared to just 10 years ago. This puts tremendous strain on American families, and small businesses. In order for us to take steps forward, we must reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy and develop new “home-grown” energy solutions right here in our own communities.

That is why this hearing on innovative energy solutions is so important. I do not believe that the search for new energy sources should be a zero sum game where we foster one industry to the detriment to another. Our economy is driven by energy, and we must take a balanced approach to exploring ways to meet our energy needs. That means looking for ways to increase production of everything we need--including oil, natural gas and coal, in addition to renewable energy like advanced biofuels, wind and solar energy.

As it has been shown in most all industries in the United States, small businesses can be the catalyst that drives innovation to new and better technology; new technology that harnesses energy that we did not have the capabilities to utilize before. There are many exciting developments in the biofuel, wind, solar, and hydroelectric industries. Colorado is a national wind energy leader and has lots of small businesses who are finding innovative ways to be successful.

One of these Colorado small businesses employs 24 people and is leading the way in direct drive generator technology for wind turbines which I understand will be more reliable, more efficient, lower weight and lower cost than competing technologies and will reduce the cost of energy. Having said that, businesses in the wind industry are not immune from the same challenges faced by other businesses and one of the biggest complaints I continue to hear from wind energy developers is the need for certainty from the federal government. Vetsas, which is a major employer in my district, has warned that it could lay off as many as 1,600 Colorado workers, and wind project developers have essentially put their plans on hold until the federal government acts. Wind is critical to the all-of-the-above energy approach, and I believe Congress must provide the certainty necessary so this industry can continue to have economic growth and protect American jobs. I will continue to support these jobs and push for this timely solution.

The advancement of new technologies moves us towards an “all-of-the-above” energy policy and greater energy independence that grows our economy and creates jobs.

Just last week, I introduced H.R. 4381, the “Planning for American Energy Act of 2012.” This legislation represents a true all-of-the-above energy plan that embraces all of America’s vast energy resources. The bill strengthens our energy security by requiring the Secretary of the Interior to develop a strategic plan every four years on how to responsibly develop our federal onshore energy resources including oil, natural gas, coal, wind, solar, hydropower, geothermal, oil shale, biomass and other minerals so we can meet the United States’ energy demands. We live in a country with tremendous natural resources and I firmly believe that we can responsibly develop alternative sources of fuel along with our more traditional sources and I believe that this legislation will help foster that development.

Again, I want to thank each of you for being here with us today. I look forward to hearing your testimony. I now yield to Ranking Member Critz for his opening statement.