



CONGRESSMAN ALAN B. MOLLOHAN, CHAIRMAN

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE & RELATED AGENCIES

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Opening Statement of Chairman Alan B. Mollohan
Science Education

Good Morning, Mr. Nye and Dr. Pratt. Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics or STEM are a key to US economic growth and STEM education is key to the continuing health of the US science enterprise.

This week the Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee has been taking testimony on the state of science in the US and the roles the four research agencies in our jurisdiction – NASA, NSF, NOAA, and NIST – in the overall science enterprise. This morning we turn our attention to science education, a major program within NSF and a component of the activities of the NASA and NOAA. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 specifically increased funding for education programs at NSF by \$100 million and provided \$180 million at NIST for a competitive grant program for construction of research science buildings. This illustrates the importance of science education in appropriations.

In testimony from Ralph Cicerone, President of the National Academy of Sciences, he pointed out that US graduate education in science and engineering is highly respected throughout the world and there are other countries working to emulate it. However, this is not the case with K-12 science education. We all have seen reports in the press about the poor average performance of US students on comparative tests of science learning. Engineering graduate enrollment is now overwhelmingly drawn from abroad, and while that is good to the extent that it draws bright, creative minds to our shores and economy, it begs the question as to where is the stream of US students to pursue graduate engineering degrees.

Our emphasis in this hearing is on K-12 STEM education and the preparation, recruitment, and retention of science teachers. We are pleased to have as witnesses Bill Nye, the Science Guy, and Dr. Harold Pratt, former president of the National Science Teachers Association. Both are in touch with US science education, both as educators and through meeting with thousands of science teachers each year. We look forward to learning about the status of science education in the US and its future direction.