

Opening Statement  
**Congressman Ralph M. Hall**  
Markup of Energy Legislation  
Committee on Science  
April 2, 2003

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

First of all, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for the high degree of cooperation and the courtesies you and your staff have extended to us as we prepared for this markup today. One of the reasons that the Science Committee produces such high quality legislation is the cooperative spirit that exists among the members and staff day-in and day-out and it shows up in the work product.

Once again we are back on energy legislation. This nation needs an energy bill now and we need one as soon as we can put it on the President's desk.

We need to begin to take the steps necessary to ensure that our domestic supply is as secure as we can make it. Much of the crude oil and refined petroleum products we are using today comes from unstable areas of the world. We are at war in the Middle East and no one can predict whether oil will continue to flow from that area. A significant supply disruption will be devastating to this country and much of the rest of the world.

That is an unacceptable risk for this nation to take, especially when we have more choices on how we are going to meet our energy needs than any other developed nation. Other nations are envious of the options we have before us – abundant coal, oil and gas, nuclear, wind, solar, geothermal, falling water – all are there for us to use.

A strong energy R&D program is the key to ensuring that this nation not only survives but also prospers in the perilous times ahead.

The legislation before us today and the amendments that will be offered to it provide the underpinnings of a strong R&D program. Some of that work was done last year in the conference between the House and Senate on H.R. 4. Much of that work has been incorporated into this bill.

Our members will recognize their handiwork in those provisions.

Among the major new elements are revised hydrogen provisions to reflect the President's commitment to a strong hydrogen production, infrastructure and vehicle technology development program; and new fusion provisions that recognize the Administration's commitment to resume participation in the ITER project.

The question of whether the Department of Energy should regulate itself on occupational and nuclear safety matters has been debated for years. There is considerable sentiment that DOE ought to begin the process of turning jurisdiction in the laboratories under the Office of Science over to the OSHA and NRC. I believe this issue is ripe for discussion, and we begin that public process today.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield whatever time I have to the Ranking Democratic Member of the Energy Subcommittee, Mr. Lampson, for any comments he may have.