

Committee on Resources

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**Opening Statement
of
The Honorable Barbara Cubin
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy & Mineral Resources
Oversight Hearing
on
The Impact of Science on Public Policy
February 4, 2004**

The Subcommittee meets today for an oversight hearing on the Impact of Science on Public Policy.

Environmental policy, laws and regulations are often based on scientific research. These policies in turn influence and impact our national energy and minerals programs.

Questions about the quality of scientific data used in the regulatory process are often raised by the regulated community and the individuals directly impacted by the regulation.

In many cases those questioning the quality of the scientific data or research are themselves scientists and have experience with the specific field of study.

So, how does a lawmaker or the general public determine who's science is correct?

Understanding the scientific process, its strengths and limitations is central to developing intelligent policies for accessing the Nation's energy, mineral and environmental resources.

Societal decisions reflected in our environmental laws and regulations rely upon science but ultimately are the product of ethics, beliefs, consensus and many other processes outside the domain of science.

Today we will hear from scientists who will describe the scientific process, the role of peer review in assessing scientific research, and the politics of science.

We will hear how science has advanced society and improved our utilization of energy and mineral resources.

And finally we will hear how the "precautionary principle" -- applied to environmental policy and regulation -- has resulted in adverse consequences for domestic and international projects and programs.

I look forward to hearing from our distinguished guests this afternoon on this important issue – Science and its relationship to sound public policy.

Before we begin I would like to submit the transcript for the "Meeting On Coal's Contribution to the United States Economy and the Intermountain West," held on Monday, November 24, 2003 in Gillette, Wyoming for the record.