

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE

SHERWOOD BOEHLERT (R-NY), CHAIRMAN

BART GORDON (D-TN), RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

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BOEHLERT, GORDON CALL FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW NANOTECHNOLOGY REPORT

WASHINGTON - **House Science Committee Chairman Sherwood Boehlert** (R-NY) and **Ranking Democrat Bart Gordon** (D-TN) issued the following joint statement in response to a paper published today in the journal *Nature* laying out a research agenda to understand the environmental, health, and safety implications of nanotechnology. (The paper, "Safe Handling of Nanotechnology," is by Dr. Andrew Maynard, Chief Science Advisor for the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and thirteen co-authors from business, research and academic organizations.)

"This paper should be a landmark in the history of nanotechnology research. It lays out a clear, reasonable, prioritized, consensus-based set of priorities for examining the potential environmental and health consequences of nanotechnology over the next decade and a half. This paper should eliminate any remaining excuses for inaction in this vitally important area.

"At our most recent Science Committee hearing on this subject in September, both of us made clear that we felt the Administration was moving too slowly with preparing and funding a research agenda in this area when a sense of urgency was needed. And indeed several of the agency witnesses acknowledged that they too were dissatisfied with the status of this research. There is absolutely no reason that those same agencies and the White House should not now quickly put together a plan and a budget to implement the recommendations in the *Nature* paper as part of the fiscal 2008 budget.

"There is too much at stake to continue to dally. Nanotechnology is an area of research that could add billions of dollars to our economy, but that won't happen if it is shrouded in uncertainty about its consequences. And our citizens, especially individuals who will be working with nanotechnology, need to be protected from any potential harm that could come from materials far smaller than what they have generally been exposed to in the past. We are at a rare moment when industry and environmental leaders both see the tremendous need and tremendous benefit from moving forward with this research. The government has an obligation to help fund and conduct that research. We need to move now when the issues are most pressing and the politics are most conducive to addressing them."

The Science Committee wrote the law establishing the National Nanotechnology Initiative and has held several hearings on the environmental and safety risks of nanotechnology, most recently on Sept. 21.

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