

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
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**Opening Statement of Rep. Diana DeGette**  
**Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations**  
**“OMB’s Role in the DOE Loan Guarantee Process”**  
**Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations**  
**June 24, 2011**

We are convened here today under highly unusual circumstances: we have an empty chair where we typically have a witness. The majority’s invited witness, Mr. Jeffrey Zients, Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget, has made clear his willingness to appear before the Committee, but he was unable to attend at the majority’s preferred date and time.

I find the majority’s approach to this hearing troubling. The hearing date was announced before the majority even contacted the witness to ascertain his availability. In fact, the witness received his formal invitation to this hearing just three and a half days ago. And Mr. Zients is perfectly willing to testify. But rather than reschedule the hearing for one of the dozens of days Mr. Zients is available, the majority has called members here to question an empty chair.

Instead of truly examining OMB’s role in the Department of Energy loan guarantee program, we are spending time on a hearing that will obtain absolutely no new facts for the record. And this proceeding follows on the heels of public statements by the Chairman this spring suggesting the loan guarantee program involved political favoritism – an allegation that is completely unsupported by the documents provided by DOE and OMB, and by interviews the Committee has conducted with relevant parties.

I do believe there is potential for the Subcommittee to play a constructive oversight role going forward in this investigation. The Subcommittee could do a thoughtful review of the material we have obtained and follow the facts where they lead. And I don’t dispute that obtaining testimony from OMB officials is a legitimate means of advancing this effort. However, today’s empty chair hearing doesn’t accomplish anything and is a profound waste of our time.

I look forward to working with the Chairman to conduct a real hearing on the issues at hand.