

**Opening Statement**  
**The Honorable Vernon J. Ehlers (R-MI), Ranking Member**  
Subcommittee on Research and Science Education  
*Behind the Scenes: Science and Education at the Smithsonian Institution*  
U.S. House of Representatives  
July 21, 2010

Thank you, Chairman Lipinski. I am pleased that the Committee is holding this important hearing today.

The Smithsonian has a unique role in science and education. When I served on the Committee on House Administration, my colleagues and I were responsible for overseeing this important institution. I did my best to learn everything I could about Smithsonian's various research entities, and especially its work to improve STEM education.

A number of years ago I took a trip with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee to Panama, and while I was there I saw a sign for the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institution and decided to stop by. Despite the fact that I arrived unexpectedly, the staff there was extremely gracious in explaining their work and sharing their excitement for discovery.

I believe the Smithsonian has resources and insights unlike any other organization. It has subject matter experts who are also committed to public service. Hearing from the world's largest museum and research complex seems wise as we determine how to manage our diverse federal efforts in science, education and research.

I look forward to hearing about this topic from our witnesses.