

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

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August 8, 2022

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm  
Secretary  
United States Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm:

We write to reiterate our April 20, 2022, request to the Department of Energy (the Department or DOE) regarding its Clean Energy Corps initiative.<sup>1</sup> Our previous inquiry requested a response to our questions by May 20, 2022, but we have not received a reply.

Members of the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology (the Committee) have attempted multiple times to obtain more information on this hiring initiative. As noted in our original request, at a March 8, 2022 hearing, Members of the Committee posed questions to a Department witness on the Clean Energy Corps, but she was unable to answer them.<sup>2</sup> Following this hearing, Ranking Member Frank Lucas submitted additional questions for the record on this topic to the Department.<sup>3</sup> While the Committee appreciates the Department's response, the Department provided only very general responses and avoided addressing the questions with any specificity. For example, Ranking Member Lucas asked, "DOE has stated that it plans to hire an additional 1,000 employees. How did DOE determine the number of additional employees that would be needed?"<sup>4</sup> The Department responded, "This number is an approximate figure based on an assessment of the staff required to implement the various provisions of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)."<sup>5</sup> We were given no specifics on that staff assessment. When asked which DOE officials or employees participated in efforts to assess its existing workforce and pinpoint the need for new employees, the Department responded that "each departmental element formulated an initial staffing plan," and these staffing plans "were reviewed with DOE

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Frank Lucas, Ranking Member, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, et al., to Jennifer Granholm, Secretary, Department of Energy (Apr. 20, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> *Federal Climate Adaptation and Resilience for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Hearing Before the H. Comm. on Sci., Space, and Tech.*, 117th Cong. (2022) (Questions for the Record from Frank Lucas, Ranking Member, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, to Ingrid Kolb, Director of the Office of Management and Chief Sustainability Officer, Department of Energy) (on file with the Committee).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

leadership.”<sup>6</sup> While we understand this is a dynamic and ongoing effort, the lack of detail impedes Congress’s attempt to oversee the agency’s management and monitor the Department’s implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA).<sup>7</sup> These vague answers were given only to Ranking Member Lucas’s questions for the record, and we have yet to receive a response to the oversight letter sent in April. Committee staff have requested updates on the status of the Department’s response but have not received a reply from Department staff regarding these inquiries.<sup>8</sup> Most recently, we are disappointed that the Department has intensified its recruiting efforts for this initiative with a promotional video featuring a celebrity but has not shared with us the basic information we requested.<sup>9</sup>

As the Department has already initiated numerous funding opportunities<sup>10</sup> and structural changes<sup>11</sup> to implement the IIJA, an update on this massive hiring initiative is long overdue. Additionally, as we hear from constituents concerned about threats to our economic security and energy reliability such as a heightened risk of summer power outages,<sup>12</sup> skyrocketing gasoline prices,<sup>13</sup> and evolving threats to our energy infrastructure linked to geopolitical conflict,<sup>14</sup> we must fulfill our responsibility as legislators to oversee the Department’s prioritization of its staffing needs and balancing of its responsibilities. Finally, varying estimates from different Department officials on the number of new employees to be hired underscores the importance of open communication between Congress and the Department for the long-term vision for this initiative.<sup>15</sup>

Finally, like all of our colleagues in the House, we must consider legislation facilitating the Department’s expenditure of billions of dollars, and this lack of transparency and communication with Congress raises concerns about granting new authorities and responsibilities to the Department.

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<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> Pub. L. No. 116-260.

<sup>8</sup> Email from Minority Staff, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology to Staff, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, Department of Energy (June 9, 2022, 12:36 PM); Email from Minority Staff, House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology to Staff, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, Department of Energy (May 20, 2022, 11:45 AM) (on file with the Committee).

<sup>9</sup> DEP’T OF ENERGY, U.S. Energy Secretary Granholm Teams Up with Robert Downey Jr. on LinkedIn Account Launch Video (July 6, 2022), <https://www.energy.gov/articles/us-energy-secretary-granholm-teams-robert-downey-jr-linkedin-account-launch-video>.

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., DEP’T OF ENERGY, *Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Programs*, <https://www.energy.gov/bil/bipartisan-infrastructure-law-programs> (last visited June 23, 2022).

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., DEP’T OF ENERGY, *DOE Optimizes Structure to Implement \$62 Billion in Clean Energy Investments from Bipartisan Infrastructure Law* (Feb. 9, 2022), <https://www.energy.gov/articles/doe-optimizes-structure-implement-62-billion-clean-energy-investments-bipartisan#:~:text=WASHINGTON%2C%20D.C.%20%E2%80%94%20The%20U.S.%20Department,the%20Energy%20Act%20of%202020>.

<sup>12</sup> NORTH AM. ELEC. RELIABILITY CORP., *SUMMER RELIABILITY ASSESSMENT 2022 4-5* (May 2022).

<sup>13</sup> See, e.g., ENERGY INFO. ADMIN., *Gasoline and Diesel Fuel Update*, June 13, 2022.

<sup>14</sup> See, e.g., Ellen Nakashima, *U.S. Government and Energy Firms Close Ranks, Fearing Russian Cyberattack*, WASH. POST, Apr. 6, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/04/06/russia-cyber-attack-threat-energy/>.

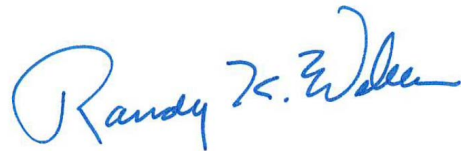
<sup>15</sup> See David Ferris, *DOE: We’re Hiring 1,000 Workers in Infrastructure Push*, E&E NEWS, May 24, 2022, <https://www.eenews.net/articles/doe-were-hiring-1000-workers-in-infrastructure-push/> (reporting one Department representative stated 750 new employees would be hired and another stated the number could reach 1,000).

As such, we respectfully reiterate our request for a response to our April 20, 2022 inquiry as soon as possible. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. For any questions on this request or to share an update on the status of the response, please contact the Minority Committee staff at (202) 225-6371.

Sincerely,



Frank D. Lucas  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Science, Space,  
and Technology



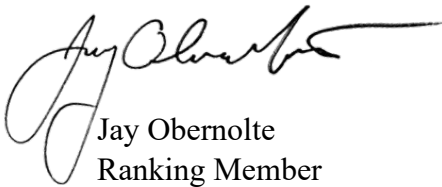
Randy Weber  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy



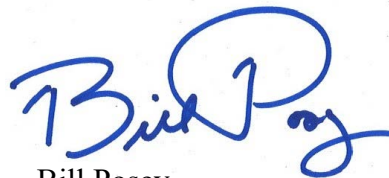
Stephanie Bice  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Environment



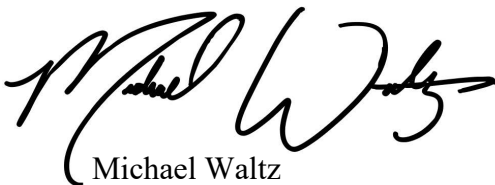
Randy Feenstra  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Research  
and Technology



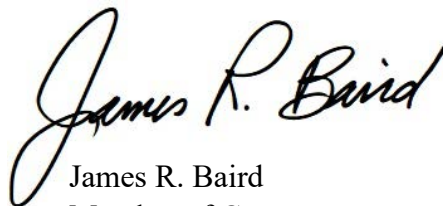
Jay Obernolte  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Investigations  
and Oversight



Bill Posey  
Member of Congress



Michael Waltz  
Member of Congress



James R. Baird  
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Carlos Gimenez  
Member of Congress

Peter Meijer  
Member of Congress

Jake Ellzey  
Member of Congress

Mike Carey  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson, Chair, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.