

Partnerships for Energy Security and Innovation Act

Summary

The Partnerships for Energy Security and Innovation Act directs the Secretary of Energy to establish a nonprofit corporation entitled the “Foundation for Energy Security and Innovation” (the Foundation). The purpose of the Foundation will be to serve as a mechanism for fostering public-private partnerships that would reinforce and advance the mission of the Department by:

- Supplementing Department-supported R&D with private sector funding;
- Facilitating the commercialization of energy technologies;
- Contributing to energy workforce development; and
- Enabling information exchange and the sharing of best practices between the Department and its external collaborators.

In realizing the purpose outlined above, the Foundation shall be authorized to carry out studies, competitions, projects, fellowships, and grants that support research, development, demonstration, or commercialization of energy and other Department-supported technologies. Funding shall be awarded based on the technical and commercialization merits of the proposed project, and funded entities will be subject to a cost-share requirement. The bill authorizes the Foundation to work with the Department to leverage the technical capabilities and expertise of the National Laboratories to augment technology commercialization activities. The Foundation may also support training and education programs relevant to its stated purpose, maturation funding to move a technology from the prototype stage to commercialization, and other stakeholder engagement activities. The Foundation will be required to provide support to and coordinate with National Laboratory-Associated Foundations.

The bill requires that the Foundation be overseen by a Board of Directors with members representing a broad cross section of stakeholders. Department officials will serve on the Board in an ex officio capacity to help ensure that the activities of the Foundation are complementary to, rather than duplicative of, those supported by the Department. The responsibilities of the Board shall include establishing the Foundation’s bylaws, providing overall direction for the Foundation, engaging private sector partners and donors to raise capital, and evaluating the performance of the Executive Director. The Foundation will be charged with meeting several oversight requirements, including the submission of a strategic plan and annual reports to relevant Congressional Committees. In addition, the Foundation will be subject to an evaluation by the Comptroller General of the United States and annual financial audits.

The current iteration of the bill would serve as a standalone counterpart to an amendment that passed as part of the Senate’s *United States Innovation and Competition Act of 2021*. Most of the text is identical, though the Committee’s version includes language that would mandate the establishment of an intellectual property policy, foster efforts to broaden participation in energy technology R&D among historically underrepresented communities and regions, and strengthen guardrails between the Foundation and the Department’s Office of Technology Transitions. A previous iteration of this bill was included in the *Clean Economy and Jobs Act* (H.R. 4447), which passed the House last September, but was removed in conference on what became the *Energy Act of 2020* due to objections from the Senate Republican Majority that could not be resolved in a timely manner.