

COMMITTEE ON
**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND
TECHNOLOGY**
CHAIRMAN LAMAR SMITH



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Media Contacts: Zachary Kurz, Laura Crist
(202) 225-6371

Statement of Chairman Lamar Smith (R-Texas)
Department of Energy Science and Technology Priorities

Chairman Smith: The Committee on Science, Space, and Technology focuses on the future. Our jurisdiction includes scientific research, development, and demonstration that makes possible America's technological innovations and industrial competitiveness.

Today we will examine the science and energy research, development and demonstration activities of the Department of Energy (DOE).

This includes the Office of Science, which conducts critical research in high energy physics, advanced scientific computing, biological and environmental research, nuclear physics, fusion energy sciences, and basic energy sciences, as well as applied energy research and development in fossil, nuclear and renewable energy. These areas comprise approximately one-third of the DOE's budget, or over 10 billion dollars in the president's fiscal year 2016 proposal.

DOE is the largest federal supporter of basic research and development and sponsors 47 percent of federal basic research in the physical sciences. The Department's science and energy research is conducted at over 300 sites nationwide, including our 17 National Labs. Over 31,000 scientific researchers take advantage of DOE user facilities each year.

However, the president's budget proposal appears to ignore the fiscal realities and constraints facing the nation. The DOE request proposes an overall increase of \$2.5 billion, or more than 9 percent, for the Department in Fiscal Year 2016 for a total of \$30 billion.

With this request, the administration continues to prioritize short-term, expensive commercialization activities and energy subsidies that result in the government picking winners and losers in the energy technology marketplace.

This administration claims to be a proponent of a balanced, all-of-the-above energy strategy. While I applaud the requested increased investment in basic scientific research and development, I am concerned that the president's true priorities in this budget lie elsewhere. For example, the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy receives an increase of \$809 million, or 42 percent. In comparison, the budgets for Fossil and Nuclear energy research and development remain stagnant.

The President's budget does not call for the most effective or efficient use of taxpayer dollars nor does it support a balanced, all-of-the-above energy strategy.

That said, I want to thank our witness, Secretary Moniz, for joining us today. While we may disagree on spending and research priorities, we do share an appreciation for the vital role DOE has in maintaining American leadership in scientific discovery and technological achievement.

The robust partnership between DOE scientists, academia, and the private sector has produced innovative breakthroughs in research as diverse as supercomputing, genomics, and nuclear science. It has helped us create the most reliable, affordable, and secure domestic energy portfolio in the world.

But we cannot afford to let Department of Energy research exist in a vacuum. We must do more to provide American entrepreneurs the opportunity to collaborate with DOE researchers and to take technology developed in the laboratory and apply it to their designs.

America's energy future is increasingly shaped by federal regulations. We must ensure that the Department of Energy provides technical expertise on the necessary energy infrastructure, the readiness of new energy technology for commercial deployment, and the impact new regulations have on the security and reliability of our electric grid. Sound science must be the guide, not politics.

Nowhere is this more apparent than with the Keystone XL pipeline and Yucca Mountain, where the science has consistently pointed to the safety of the projects, but politics drives endless delays, or sometimes even a veto. Just yesterday, the president vetoed a bipartisan Keystone XL pipeline bill that an overwhelming majority of Americans rightfully support.

Finally, it is our responsibility in Congress to ensure American tax dollars are spent wisely and efficiently. While funding every research project seems like a worthy goal, it is simply unsustainable. We will have to make tough choices about how to best use our limited resources.

As we shape the future of the Department of Energy, our priority must be to emphasize basic energy research and development, not to impose expensive and often inefficient technology on the American people.

Instead, the administration should invest in breakthrough discoveries from basic research that will continue to provide the foundation for private sector development across the energy spectrum. This will create jobs and grow our economy, which is a goal I think we all share.

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