

**Chairman Mike Simpson**  
**Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies**  
**House Committee on Appropriations**  
**Hearing on the Department of Energy's**  
**Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request**  
**April 2, 2014**  
**Opening Statement As Prepared**

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The hearing will come to order.

Secretary Moniz, it's good to see you again, and welcome to your first hearing before the subcommittee.

You've taken over the Department at a challenging time. Your institution is critical for the security of this nation, and it holds great promise for improving the livelihood and prosperity of our economy. It helps answer some of the most basic questions regarding our universe, while it is in charge of cleaning up the radioactive legacy of keeping this country safe during the Cold War and beyond.

In other words, there is no doubting the importance of the Department of Energy. Yet, there is great doubt that your Department is up to the task without significant improvements.

One of this subcommittee's most pressing concerns is the Department's inability to plan and execute major infrastructure projects. At this point, nearly every major construction project underway over the last five years – the MOX plan in South Carolina, the Waste Treatment Plant in Washington state, the Uranium Processing Facility at Y-12, and I could go on – has spectacularly broken its cost projections. And when I say “spectacularly”, I mean more than doubling, often going billions higher than the plans Congress has agreed to.

Mr. Secretary, another area of concern is the ability of the National Nuclear Security Administration to meet the needs of the Department of Defense. Let me rephrase that – to meet the needs of the Department of Defense in a way clearly communicated to and approved by Congress. It does us no good to have the Department of Energy agree to a workplan with the Department of Defense which we cannot afford. And your Department's credibility has been sorely damaged by proposing cost plans which are rapidly exceeded. This is a three-way relationship that is critical to the security of this country, and it needs your personal attention.

I mention these issues because the current state of affairs is not sustainable, and this country needs a strong Department of Energy. This subcommittee has long held your nuclear weapons mission to be your ultimate responsibility, but the actions of Russia in Ukraine remind us that energy supply can also be an issue of national security. Your Department must take that into account as it develops its research and development plans.

Yet it seems to me as if your fiscal year 2015 budget request misses the mark in that respect. The two accounts which can help secure this country's energy security today and in the coming years – nuclear energy and fossil energy – are cut, while renewable energy is increased.

I am not an enemy of renewable energy – heck, the city of Boise in my district operates the largest direct use geothermal system in the country – but coal and nuclear plants are being shut down across this country. Some of this is because of market forces like the price of natural gas, but some of these closures are also due to government policy.

There's a lot of disagreement up here about the proper role of government, but I think we all agree that the federal government's role is to inject strategic thinking into our economy, while markets rarely do that. I can't think of a clearer example of this than our energy supply. If we are going to ensure that our electrical system remains reliable, and our country prosperous, then your Department needs to be doing more to address our current fleet of power plants, not focus funding far down the road. Your Department should be helping to build a power sector prepared to quickly adapt to a time when natural gas is no longer cheap. And your Department should proposing budgets to support those objectives.

Mr. Secretary, we've had several meetings, and I've been encouraged by our discussions. You've been on the job for, what, nearly 11 months now? Let me give you fair warning for my first question, so you can prepare. I'm going to ask you what your vision is for the Department. All of these problems I've discussed today will have to be fixed as part of achieving any vision, but only a leader with a clear view of what he wants his agency to be will be able to rebuild the Department into the strong institution it must be for the security and prosperity of this country.

Secretary Moniz, please ensure that the hearing record, questions for the record, and any supporting information requested by the Subcommittee are delivered in final form to us no later than four weeks from the time you receive them. Members who have additional questions for the record will have until close of business tomorrow to provide them to the Subcommittee office.

With that, I'll turn to Ranking Member Kaptur for her opening statement.

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