



Chairman Hal Rogers

House Committee on Appropriations

Fiscal Year 2016 Budget Hearing – Department of Energy February 26, 2015 Opening Statement As Prepared

Mr. Chairman, thank you for yielding. Secretary Moniz, I appreciate you taking the time to be here today and I welcome you back to the Energy and Water subcommittee.

The Department of Energy oversees tremendous investments in a commodity that touches nearly every issue of national importance: energy. Whether readying our Navy's nuclear fleet or modeling technologies that will yield more efficient and reliable power sources – your Department's efforts are critical to our economy and our national security.

The importance of your mission, however, does not diminish our responsibility to budget sensibly and to prioritize programs of import. I must echo Chairman Simpson's concern that the Administration's request for Fiscal Year 2016 discretionary funding exceeds the statutory cap by \$71 billion. Here in the Appropriations Committee, we must abide by the Budget Control Act and the budget enacted by Congress. Unfortunately, your request is not realistic – and we're looking forward to hearing from you today about how we should make the difficult decisions necessary to correct this shortcoming in your request.

In so doing, it is my belief that we set priorities in this budget that will set us on a path toward energy independence – particularly with household power bills on the rise, volatile unrest in energy-producing regions overseas, and record cold temperatures requiring coal-fired power plants to run on overtime. We have countless opportunities to shore up our energy security in this country, and this Administration seems determined to disregard just about every one of them. Just two days ago, the President made the incomprehensible decision to veto the Keystone XL pipeline, a project that would put thousands of Americans to work. The President's rejection of this project – despite overwhelming bipartisan and industry support, along with that of the American people – is inconsistent with the "all-of-the-above" energy strategy you're highlighting today, which is necessary to keep our energy economy diverse, inexpensive, and reliable.

While this Administration would like us to think it is serious about pursuing an "all-of-the-above" energy strategy, its actions plainly undermine its rhetoric. The coal industry is fighting every day to produce the cheap, reliable energy that our economy demands while shouldering tremendous burdens imposed by this Administration's regulating bodies. While this Administration is hard at work writing new rules that would ban the initiation of new power plants, shutter existing ones, and leave thousands of coal miners out of a job, the coal industry is focused on investing in innovative technologies that will make our nation's most abundant source of energy more efficient.

Each and every year, this Administration has produced budgets that slash funding for coal-related research and development, and Congress has sent a clear message by consistently restoring these much

needed programs. While I am pleased to see the Department has requested a larger budget for the Coal CCS & Power System program than it had previously, I am disappointed that, once again, fossil fuels are being handed the short end of the stick. While renewable energy receives a healthy \$786 million increase, a 41% increase in fact, fossil energy investments are once again reduced, this time by \$11 million. Investing in CCS technology and fossil fuel research and development is critical, and this request does not demonstrate a commitment to achieving commercially viable clean coal technologies in the near term.

But the importance of the cheap, reliable energy that coal provides is not completely lost on the Administration. In fact, the President recently committed \$1 billion in taxpayer dollars to invest in clean coal projects in China – projects being pursued through YOUR Department. But not surprisingly, this Administration can't make the same commitment to the future of our energy security at home.

If this Department's priority is truly establishing an "all-of-the-above" energy policy for the future, as you have stated many times in recent weeks, then I, for one, cannot discern the Department's accompanying strategy for coal, our nation's most abundant natural resource, going forward. There is no denying that massive regulatory requirements are pushing this industry to the limit. But if the goal of these regulations is increased levels of efficiency, then where are the accompanying investments from your Department that will ultimately enable the industry to accomplish this goal? I certainly do not see these kind of investments laid out in this budget.

As you well know, these topics are critical to the future of our energy security. I look forward to hearing your testimony and hearing how you will be working to advance a truly comprehensive energy strategy in this country that includes coal. Thank you.

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