



Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen

House Committee on Appropriations

Department of Energy FY 2018 Budget Hearing June 20, 2017 Opening Statement As Prepared

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the time and I also want to welcome Secretary Perry to the Appropriations Committee. We look forward to your testimony and hearing your frank and candid views on the many issues.

Today's hearing is an important part of the oversight duties of this Committee. After all, the "power of the purse" lies in this building - it is the Constitutional duty of Congress to make spending decisions on behalf of the people we represent at home.

As you reference in your testimony, the Secretary of Energy must annually certify to the President that the American nuclear weapons stockpile remains, safe, secure, and reliable. I consider this part of your portfolio to be the most critical part of the Department of Energy.

These nuclear systems are a vital part of our national defense and they are essential to meeting our commitments to our allies and showing resolve to our adversaries. This committee has always provided vigorous support to the nuclear weapons stockpile. I am pleased to see that this Administration recognizes that with their budget request.

Your proposal for the Department also takes great strides to deliver an exascale computing system. This is an area where the U.S. has been losing ground to the Chinese and others. I agree with you that we must take back American primacy in computing science.

The United States has correctly invested heavily in science research. This work has produced dramatic scientific breakthroughs and innovation, and in the process, created high quality jobs for Americans

While I know you had many difficult decisions to make, I have concerns with cuts to the fusion program and the nuclear energy program - another area where the United States is falling behind.

As you may know, this Committee has repeatedly endorsed moving forward in the area of fusion energy. The proposed decreases would inevitably delay some of the progress we are making in this exciting field including in my home state of New Jersey at the Princeton Plasma Physics Lab (PPPL). I look forward to hearing more about these proposed cuts.

Finally, it should come as no surprise that the Committee is supportive of Yucca Mountain. It is the law of the land. We look forward to working with you to making this essential project a reality in the near future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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