

Rep. Jerry McNerney (CA-09)
Testimony to Energy & Water Subcommittee
Tuesday, April 9, 2019

Chairman and Ranking Member,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify to the Subcommittee about my priorities in this year's Energy and Water appropriations bill.

Fundamentally, we must act aggressively on climate change. As someone that spent over twenty years in the wind energy business, I am determined on this issue that we can create good jobs, provide clean energy, and mitigate the damage from climate change through strong, immediate action.

I would like to use my time today to talk about three of my priorities for this year's appropriations bill: (1) fund cutting edge research for renewable, energy storage, and climate intervention technologies; (2) restart the process for a repository for nuclear waste; and (3), adaption measures to make our communities more resilient to the effects of climate change.

As Vice Chair of the Energy Subcommittee on the Energy & Commerce Committee, I urge the subcommittee to fund our clean energy priorities. Importantly, this includes the Energy Department's Offices of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy as well as the Office of Electricity and Delivery and the new cyber office within it, and the Office of Science's basic research mission.

I have co-chaired the Grid Innovation Caucus for many years and we must transform our grid to a bi-directional, fluid, and resilient backbone of our electric infrastructure. We must fund technology, research, and development programs to create an energy system that adapts to changing distributed resources, climate, and costs. DOE's programs across the spectrum, from EERE to ARPA-E to the Office of Science, including our national labs, are central to this effort. I must add that climate adaption, mitigation, and intervention strategies across the board should be on the table.

We must also work together to find a permanent solution to nuclear waste. While we have not had a major accident yet, there are tens of thousands of tons of high-level nuclear waste sitting in relatively exposed conditions. This is a tragedy waiting to happen.

I was a graduate student in mathematics in New Mexico and studied the Waste Isolation Pilot Project near Carlsbad. Nuclear waste has engineering solutions. This is a political problem.

A successful nuclear waste storage project will need transparency with the community, and while there will always be some amount of opposition, Congress must work with the community for local buy-in. This is why we must work towards an interim storage solution that is tied to a permanent repository—one requires the other.

Finally, I urge the Committee to fund adaption and mitigation efforts through the Army Corps of Engineers. Specifically, the Operations & Maintenance and Construction accounts are important to flood control and resilience efforts. Two projects in my district are a part of the Army Corp's work plan and I encourage full funding of these accounts.

I thank the Committee for this opportunity.