



As Prepared

Chairwoman Marcy Kaptur
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Hearing on the Department of Energy’s Applied Energy Programs’
FY 2021 Budget Requests
March 3, 2020

The Subcommittee will come to order. Let us begin our second hearing on the fiscal year 2021 budget request, for the Department of Energy’s applied energy programs. Thank you to our witnesses for being here.

We come together this afternoon to discuss DOE’s applied energy programs, which cover energy efficiency, electric grid modernization and security, and energy technologies such as renewables, nuclear, and fossil. The energy future of our country depends on DOE’s vital investments to achieve breakthroughs to solve our toughest energy challenges. These programs are at the epicenter of those efforts, and past successes of these programs have increased energy security and resulted in the United States becoming a net energy exporter, as shown from the Energy Information Administration.

Looking toward fiscal year 2021, however, the Trump Administration again proposes to cut DOE’s budget – this time by an astounding 35 percent in non-defense programs. This will limit America’s future opportunities by drastically reducing or eliminating programs critical for meeting our future energy needs and assuring our security. These programs have received bipartisan, bicameral support precisely because of their crucial role in undergirding our economy and preparing our nation for the future to come – including the clean energy economy. One need look no further than a recent Bureau of Labor Statistics listing of key job categories seeking employees – first on the list is solar installers, like you see pictured – to know that these programs already are major job creators.

This budget request also returns to the Trump Administration’s seeming obsession with funding only early-stage research and development (R&D). As I told Secretary Brouillette in last week’s hearing, private industry has repeatedly stated that they would not fund the kind of middle and later stage R&D, including demonstrations, that is being proposed for elimination in this request.

Without these critical federal investments, we won’t be able to move early-stage R&D forward and really continue to launch companies to the stage that private investors will pick up the work. Abandoning this research sends a blank check to China and our global competitors. It turns our back on promising research that is critical to reinventing the American energy economy. I am reminded of a quote from Robert Kennedy: “Some people see things as they are and say why? I dream things that never were and say, why not?”

These ill-advised cuts are almost too frequent to enumerate. But allow me to point out a few particularly egregious examples:

- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy funding – slashed by 74 percent. Wow. Technologies like displayed will all be cut by 76 to 83 percent: Vehicle Technologies, Bioenergy Technologies, Building Technologies, and Advanced Manufacturing.
- Elimination of the Weatherization Program, which is so pivotal to achieving energy conservation for existing structures and helping lower-income families, including our seniors, to reduce their energy costs.
- Carbon-free Nuclear Energy R&D – cut by 21 percent.
- Carbon Capture, Utilization, and Storage research within Fossil Energy – cut by 44 percent.
- Resilient Distribution Systems within the Office of Electricity – cut by nearly 60 percent. That program focuses on technologies to ensure the distribution portion of the electric grid can withstand and quickly recover from disruptions. Given the increasing frequency and severity of storms and the potential of increasing cyberattacks, our nation simply cannot cede our future to chance.

Unfortunately, once again the President’s budget request harms American leadership and our energy future, our competitiveness, our environment, our workforce, our consumers, and our economy.

With that, I’ll close my remarks. Thank you to all of our DOE witnesses for being here today. We look forward discussing this request and adapting it accordingly.

I’d like to turn to our Ranking Member, Mr. Simpson, for his opening remarks.