

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927  
Minority (202) 225-3641

**Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Hearing on “The Fiscal Year 2014 U.S. Department of Energy Budget”**  
**Subcommittee on Energy and Power**  
**June 13, 2013**

Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here today. The Department of Energy will benefit from your expertise and leadership, and we look forward to working with you as the nation continues its transition to a clean energy economy.

The Department has a host of challenging responsibilities – from cleaning up Cold War era nuclear sites and maintaining our nuclear weapons stockpile to managing 17 national labs and operating the strategic petroleum reserve. Running the Department of Energy is a big job, and you have the experience to do it.

But I want to tell you how I view your role. I look at your responsibilities through the lens of climate change. Climate change is the biggest energy challenge we face. There is no debate about the science. Climate change is happening now, it is caused by humans, and the impacts are real.

The paramount responsibility of the Secretary of Energy is advancing the nation’s response to this existential threat.

For decades, experts have talked about the potential future impacts from climate change. They’ve warned that in the future we’ll face extreme heat waves, floods, droughts, wildfires, ocean acidification, and dramatic sea level rise.

These are no longer future threats; they are happening today. Climate change is spawning extreme weather across the country ... from the Texas droughts to the Colorado wildfires ... to Superstorm Sandy.

And as the impacts mount, the window for effective action to address climate change is closing. Just this week, the International Energy Agency warned that unless the world acts to reduce carbon pollution before 2020, global temperatures could rise by more than 9 degrees Fahrenheit, which would “be a disaster for all countries.” IEA found that taking key actions now to reduce emissions could be done at no net economic cost, while delay would impose trillions of dollars in costs on society.

Mr. Secretary, your job would be a lot easier with support from Congress, but don't count on it. This Committee – and the Republican-controlled House – has become one of the last remaining refuges of the flat earth society. We have the jurisdiction to do so much to protect future generations, yet we won't even hold hearings to hear from the scientists.

So you will have to act without us. President Obama got it exactly right in his State of the Union address when he said that if Congress did not act, he would.

Some of the most important authorities are those in the Department of Energy. You need to act aggressively to strengthen energy efficiency standards for appliances and equipment. That will save consumers money while reducing energy use and carbon pollution.

You should implement the President's proposal for a Race to the Top on energy efficiency and grid modernization to encourage states to voluntarily adopt forward-leaning policies.

And you can invest in research and development and provide other support for promising clean energy and energy storage technologies.

Mr. Secretary, you also can play an important role in educating Congress and the public about the threat of climate change and the urgent need for action.

We are at a critical crossroads. We face great peril if we ignore the science and cling to the fuels of the past. Or we can listen to the scientists, invest in the clean energy technologies of the future, and lead the world in energy innovation.

Mr. Secretary, I am confident you will help us choose the right path and look forward to your testimony.