

Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Energy
Hearing on “DOE Modernization: Advancing DOE’s Mission for
National, Economic, and Energy Security of the United States”
January 9, 2018

(As prepared for delivery)

Today’s hearing begins the Subcommittee’s work this Session to identify what steps Congress may take to be sure DOE can address the national, economic, and energy security challenges that will be confronting the nation over the coming decades.

In recent years, we’ve been updating certain agency programs and authorities to shift DOE’s mission focus more fully away from the energy scarcity mindset of its founding in the 1970s.

We’ve worked to position the agency more appropriately towards the tremendous energy resources now available to our nation— and the economic and geopolitical benefits of those resources. We’ve sought to modernize the department’s Strategic Petroleum Reserve and its response capabilities. And we’ve upgraded DOE’s emergency preparedness for energy supply disruptions and its authorities to protect critical infrastructure from physical and cyber threats.

But we are reminded almost daily that more needs to be done. Growing nuclear weapons threats and the tens of billions of dollars needed to maintain the nuclear deterrent underscore the urgency for creating efficient, effective, and durable governance and management of DOE’s nuclear security missions.

The increasingly complex interconnections of our modern energy systems, propelled by the digital efficiencies of the cyber age, present new and growing risks. Getting ahead of these risks requires Secretarial leadership and coordinated attention across the agency’s many programs and operations.

Modernizing the Department of Energy means ensuring it has the appropriate statutory authorities and sound management structure to meet not only the challenges we know about today, but what may be coming over the horizon.

It means ensuring agency leadership can align the department’s operations and resources to meet priorities. It means ensuring the tremendous scientific and

technological assets of this agency are effectively focused for the benefit of the long-term security and prosperity of Americans.

Our two panels today will help us look at what is needed to meet current and emerging challenges. We will hear from the senior leadership of the Department on the first panel.

Dan Brouillette, who once served this Committee very well as its staff director, is the Deputy Secretary for the Department. He is essentially DOE's chief operating officer, and so I look forward to hearing his plans for aligning the department to meet the Administration's priorities, and to discuss those priorities.

He is joined by the three Department Under Secretaries, responsible for the bulk of its missions. Under Secretary of Energy Mark Menezes, also a capable alumnus of this Committee, can help us understand what is necessary to enhance the department's work regarding all our national energy policy interests, and what more may be needed to enhance DOE's emergency and cyber functions.

General Frank Klotz, who heads the Department's nuclear security enterprise and, with several years under his belt at DOE, has important perspective on what is needed for efficient and effective execution of the Department's vital nuclear and nonproliferation programs, and related work across DOE's enterprise.

Finally, Under Secretary for Science Paul Dabbar, can help examine how best to deploy and maintain the scientific and technological capabilities the national laboratory system and its facilities offer to support the Department's missions. He also has new responsibilities for the Office of Environmental Management—which oversees complicated environmental cleanup projects that present a host of management challenges.

Our second panel offers broader perspectives to help us assess what more is needed to improve execution of the agency's missions and to prepare for future challenges.

We'll hear from distinguished leaders and scientists on what is necessary to unleash the full benefits of the national laboratory system. We'll hear how to ensure appropriate oversight and management of projects and programs in the national and nuclear security space and across departmental activities.

We'll hear how better to focus DOE's support of innovation and what our era of energy abundance means for DOE responsibilities, here and abroad.

Our testimony today will start a record to inform our modernization efforts and to assist us as we prioritize what program authorizations to tackle in the upcoming Session of Congress.