

Chairman Robert E. Latta
Opening Statement—Subcommittee on Energy
“The Fiscal Year 2026 Department of Energy Budget”
June 10, 2025

As prepared for delivery

Welcome to today’s hearing on the Department of Energy’s Fiscal Year 2026 budget and welcome Secretary Chris Wright to your first hearing before the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Secretary Wright, in your confirmation hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, you stated three goals: unleash American energy dominance, lead the world in innovation and technological breakthroughs, and once again allow entrepreneurs to build in this country.

This sentiment could not come at a more critical juncture.

Around the world, adversarial nations like China, are exploiting energy markets and critical minerals to advance their national interests at the expense of the security of the United States.

Our own nation faces an electric reliability crisis that could threaten the everyday lives of hardworking Americans.

Infrastructure development has been left at a virtual standstill after the regulatory onslaught of the previous administration.

All the while, we are in the midst of a critical race to lead the world in AI development.

The stakes could not be higher, which is why the ambitious goals laid out under your leadership are so critical to the interests of our country.

After five months on the job, your department has remained steadfastly committed to these efforts.

Your department reversed course on the disastrous LNG export ban and once again ensured our abundant natural resources can be utilized as a diplomatic tool for our allies abroad.

To reduce unnecessary federal overreach, your department rescinded dozens of burdensome and unworkable efficiency regulations and standards that the previous administration designed to advance a one-size-fits-all approach to energy efficiency.

Over the last few weeks, the department issued necessary 202(c) emergency waivers to continue the operation of baseload power plants to protect grid reliability in regions across the country during the upcoming summer months.

And just two weeks ago, the White House released the Reinvigorating the Nuclear Industrial Base Executive Order, which will empower DOE to expedite and promote the use of nuclear energy in the United States.

Importantly, these efforts will leverage the bipartisan work of our ADVANCE Act to fuel a domestic nuclear renaissance and power next generation industries.

As you have documented, you are continuing your ongoing tour of all 17 national labs, our crown jewels, which will be critical in leading the world in technological breakthroughs.

This includes the recent announcement of a new supercomputer at the Lawrence Berkely National Lab that will be vital to the continued development of AI and fusion energy.

I am encouraged that your department has been rightly focused on the energy needs of our growing AI industry and why it is so important for our nation, and the world, for the United States to win.

Your department has also remained committed to President Trump's agenda to be stewards of finite taxpayer resources by aligning federal resources with high priority projects and eliminating wasteful spending.

As we discuss cost-cutting measures at your department, it is important to remember that the previous administration received over \$100 billion in new funding and \$400 billion in loan authority from the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

The previous administration seemingly issued financial assistance awards in a haphazard manner that lacked accountability.

In fact, in the 76 days between election day and President Trump's inauguration, the department issued almost \$100 billion in new loans, compared to \$43 billion in loans issued over the loan office's 20-year lifespan.

This level of government subsidies was irresponsible and unsustainable, focused on misguided priorities, and was often done to the detriment of free markets and private enterprises.

The fiscal year 2026 budget request reflects these priorities and will refocus the Department of Energy on its core mission as you continue reorganization efforts, as is customary for incoming Administrations.

We look forward to our continued work together to achieve common goals to unleash American energy dominance, lead the world in next generation industries, and fuel economic prosperity throughout the country.

I look forward to today's discussion and yield back the balance of my time.