

Chairman Robert Latta
Subcommittee on Energy Hearing:
“Department of Energy FY 27 Budget”
April 16, 2026

Welcome to today’s hearing on the Department of Energy’s Fiscal Year 2027 budget and welcome back, Secretary Chris Wright, to the Energy Subcommittee of the Energy and Commerce Committee.

Almost 14 months ago, you inherited a department that was not serving the strategic energy needs of the nation.

The previous Administration lacked a realistic national energy security strategy. They wasted billions of taxpayer dollars reducing reliable energy and making our energy systems ill-prepared to meet this historic moment of the next generation economy.

After more than a year at the helm of our Energy Department, things look very different.

Under your leadership, our nation’s energy strategy prioritizes core responsibilities of energy and national security, reliable power, affordability, and economic growth.

You’ve charted a path to ensure U.S. leadership in future technologies that are reshaping the global order.

Finite taxpayer resources have been shifted to focus on abundant, reliable energy expansion. You've harnessed DOE's computing power to put AI to use for societal benefit.

You've accelerated work on nuclear technologies, increased collaboration to secure the grid during emergencies, and increased resources on our nuclear deterrent.

You've also refocused the Department's loan program on energy expansion and reliability.

Most of these actions are reflected in DOE's proposed budget. These efforts couldn't come at a more important time.

International conflicts and decisive military actions by the Trump Administration to protect our country have put increased pressure on ensuring a secure and reliable energy system.

While DOE has diligently worked to focus on essential energy and security priorities, more work remains.

Affordability continues to be a key concern facing American families.

We'd like to get your perspective on the impacts on oil prices from the conflict with Iran, and what the prospects for more stable supplies would mean.

And we should also unpack the forces behind higher energy costs.

Average utility bills rose by 11 percent in 2025 after increasing by 29 percent in the four years prior, and substantially higher across our nation's bluest states.

In fact, recent reports from the Lawrence Berkeley National Lab confirm far-left policies are driving price increases that are burdening households and businesses.

We should examine how misguided policies leave our communities vulnerable when they need electricity the most, and what DOE is doing about that.

Recent weather events during Winter Storm Fern exposed the risks of overreliance on weather dependent energy.

DOE's decisive 202(c) orders and effective emergency planning were critical to protect against blackouts, ultimately saving lives and preventing billions of dollars in economic damage.

While mismanaged public policies disrupt our power sector, historic projections of demand growth from data centers and reshoring manufacturing continue to climb.

Data centers alone could consume up to 17 percent of total electricity, which is also 60 percent higher than estimates projected in 2024.

Importantly, DOE has taken several steps to ensure data centers can connect to the grid in a way that drives prices down and does not burden ratepayers with additional costs.

This subcommittee has spent considerable time examining this historic load growth and what type of energy system is needed to fuel data center demand.

Without fail, experts across the field have testified that the answer is dispatchable, reliable, and affordable supplies of baseload power.

In recognition of these needs, the Department has prioritized dispatchable resources that can power next-generation technologies and keep the lights on when we need it most.

Alongside these efforts, the Department has focused on ushering in a nuclear renaissance.

This ranges from your work to accelerate the development of American nuclear fuel infrastructure and of reprocessing used fuel to your work to demonstrate more new reactor designs.

We should examine how your work will dovetail with the Nuclear Regulatory Commission commercial licensing to provide a robust safety process for nuclear expansion.

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