



Opening Statement of Chairman Frank Lucas

Full Committee Hearing

An Overview of the Budget Proposal for the Department of Energy for Fiscal Year 2025

June 26, 2024

The Department of Energy was established in response to the oil crisis of 1973 with the mission of “ensuring America’s security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental, and nuclear challenges through transformative science and technology solutions.”

In carrying out this mission, DOE has rightly prioritized fundamental research through the Office of Science and its National Laboratories. Even today DOE remains the largest federal sponsor of basic physical sciences research.

Yet in recent years, DOE has moved away from its core mission of “transformative science and technological solutions” to deploying mature technologies and attempting to lead a forced nationwide green energy transition.

The FY25 budget request continues this concerning trend. Although I am glad to see the Department request an increase to the Office of Science, this budget does little to rebalance the massive shifts in priorities mandated by the recent Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act.

Through the IIJA and IRA, DOE established 75 new demonstration and deployment programs and received approximately \$100 billion in additional funding.

The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy alone received an additional \$16 billion in the IIJA to supplement its annual appropriations, which have increased by over half a billion dollars since FY21. Meanwhile the IRA appropriated an additional \$11 billion to the Loan Program Office to finance large-scale infrastructure projects.

To support these new programs and funding increases, the Department underwent a reorganization, hired over a thousand new employees, and established several new offices.

I’m not hoping for failure, but the growth in bureaucracy and the potential for waste, fraud, and abuse stemming from these bills makes it almost guaranteed to happen.

Perhaps even more concerning, this shift in focus comes at the expense of the Office of Science and its fundamental research. As this Committee knows well, the Office of Science is home to world-class research and user facilities that accelerate advancements in various disciplines, including material sciences, fusion energy, and nuclear physics.

While DOE’s funding for later-stage research and deployment through EERE and LPO has seen big cash influxes, the Office of Science received zero additional funding through the IIJA and only \$1.5 billion for the National Labs’ infrastructure in the IRA.

In my opinion, this discrepancy creates a future where DOE picks winners and losers by funding select energy sources but does not carry out the fundamental research needed by industry to make generational breakthroughs for multiple energy sources.

That is the opposite of an all-the-above energy strategy. And if DOE isn't conducting that early-stage, groundbreaking research, no one will.

Instead of continuing down this alarming path through DOE's FY25 budget request, we should seek to fully fund the provisions authorized in the CHIPS and Science Act. This bipartisan bill was the first comprehensive reauthorization of the Office of Science and was meant to catapult DOE into the 21st century in key technological areas such as fusion energy, advanced computing, and microelectronics.

While I fully understand we in Congress must play our part and appropriate the funds, it would be helpful to see DOE support our efforts by requesting similar funding levels. But that's not what the FY25 request does.

Despite that, I am hopeful today's conversation will be productive. I look forward to hearing from Deputy Secretary Turk on how DOE continues to manage the large funding influxes it has received and how the difficult decisions associated with this budget were made.

Thank you for being here today, Deputy Secretary. I yield back the balance of my time.