



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON **SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Full Committee Hearing:

“An Overview of the Department of Energy’s Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request”

June 10, 2026

Good morning and thank you, Chairman Babin, for holding this hearing today.

Mr. Wright, it has been over 16 months since you were sworn in as the Secretary of Energy, yet this is the first time you have testified before the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology. This is completely unacceptable. As you and your team should understand by now, this Committee has sole jurisdiction in the House of Representatives over the authorization of all of DOE’s nonmilitary science and energy research, development, demonstration, and commercialization programs that you have said you care so deeply about. In fact, this is the first time I’m even speaking with you. We expect to engage with you far more directly and frequently going forward.

Moving on to examining your tenure as Secretary to date, the damage that you and the broader Administration have already inflicted on our national energy innovation enterprise is frankly staggering. You had a team of seriously unqualified political appointees cancel billions of dollars in DOE awards across the country that had been provided, as directed by Congress, through extremely rigorous, independent, merit-based processes. A federal court has found these terminations – concentrated in so-called “blue states” per the unhinged public boasting of OMB Director Russell Vought – to be blatantly illegal. These politically motivated cuts include well over a billion dollars in support for vital next generation energy projects throughout my home state of California.

Now I’ll note that three weeks ago, and without congressional authorization, President Trump attempted to set up a slush fund to pay out money to people – mostly convicted criminals, fraudsters, cop killers, and no shortage of sex offenders – that he claims were victimized by the government. I hope Congress will take action to prohibit the establishment of this fund. But if not, maybe the 40 million people of California should apply for funding under this program given the Administration’s illegal actions against our citizens.

There must also be accountability for the mass firings and coerced departures of thousands of dedicated experts throughout DOE and our national laboratories, as well as the illegal elimination of a functional Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations as spelled out in the law. You can call these “efficiencies” or “business-informed decisions” all you want, but that doesn’t make them smart or good for the American people. Last year, you yourself recognized that perhaps arbitrarily firing hundreds of professionals at the National Nuclear Security Administration whose job it is to safeguard our nuclear secrets and ensure the reliability of our weapons stockpile was not the best idea in the world. We now have reports from practically every relevant sector that these personnel cuts at DOE have severely harmed the ability of Congressionally mandated research and security programs across the Department to carry out their statutory missions. But I suspect that was the point all along.

I don’t know how we can reconcile your vaunted expertise in the energy sector with your absurdly inaccurate statements on the role that wind and solar power play in lowering consumer costs and ensuring the reliability of our electric grid. Yes, we all know that the wind doesn’t always blow and the sun doesn’t always shine. Believe it or not, we’re not idiots. But look at those crazy liberal bastions called Iowa and Texas. Their grid operators will tell you that they have been managing variable electricity demand with large amounts of electricity generated from renewables **for decades**. And the energy costs are far less expensive for their citizens than they would be if wind and solar weren’t a major part of their portfolios, even without federal subsidies. So, are Iowa and Texas stupid, Mr. Secretary?

Lastly, I know you went to MIT – but you must recognize that you have lost any credibility as a scientific expert after commissioning a widely debunked, error-filled climate “science” report through a slap-dash process that has proven to be illegal in a court of law. So much for “restoring gold standard science.” This all might be funny if it weren’t true.

I would love to have focused on our mutual support for dramatically accelerating the development and commercialization of fusion energy. But as you hopefully understand by now, you have a lot of explaining to do before this Committee today and throughout the remainder of your time in this job.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.