

Opening Statement of the Honorable Fred Upton
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
Hearing on “The Fiscal Year 2014 U.S. Department of Energy Budget”
June 13, 2013

(As Prepared for Delivery)

Today we welcome Secretary Moniz to the committee to receive his testimony on the Department of Energy’s FY 2014 budget.

It has been over 30 years since Congress enacted the Department of Energy Organization Act of 1977. That was a different time – a time of dwindling oil and gas supplies, rising energy prices, and overreliance on energy imports from unfriendly nations. In short, it was a time of energy scarcity and uncertainty. Fast-forward three decades and our energy landscape is dramatically different. We have entered a new era of energy abundance, providing a level of energy security and certainty that was simply unimaginable just a few years ago.

American ingenuity and innovative technologies have powered an incredible energy transition, turning the trends in domestic oil and natural gas production upside down. According to the International Energy Agency, the U.S. is now the world’s leading producer of natural gas, and has a chance to surpass Saudi Arabia as the world’s largest oil producer by 2020.

While we should all support a diverse and balanced energy strategy, including renewables and energy efficiency, unfortunately, the president’s FY 2014 budget for the Department of Energy ignores our new energy landscape. The president’s energy budget doubles-down on the failed policies of the last four years, continuing to risk taxpayer dollars on “green energy” programs that have proven costly, ineffective, and failed to deliver the jobs as promised. Notably, the president calls for \$2.8 billion for DOE’s Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy – a 56 percent increase over prior years. This amount is nearly double the budgets of the Offices of Nuclear Energy, Fossil Energy, and Electricity combined. Such a disparity in funding levels directly conflicts with the president’s stated commitment to an “all-of-the-above” energy strategy.

The president’s energy budget isn’t just about dollars and cents; it’s about priorities for the country. And the priorities set forth in his budget are out of touch with today’s energy reality and present a stark contrast from the energy priorities being pursued by this committee. Our vision for the nation’s energy future is a true, open “all-of-the-above” strategy that would promote greater production and use of our new energy abundance, facilitate private sector innovation to develop advanced energy technologies and manufacturing, and ensure U.S. consumers have a long-term supply of reliable and affordable energy. It should also include a global perspective on how North America’s abundant resources can be used to launch strategic international diplomacy and geopolitical stability around the world.

To achieve these objectives, I believe it is time to repurpose the Department of Energy to reflect the opportunities of today and meet the challenges of tomorrow, and I am happy to see the secretary’s testimony reflect new ideas in both organizational changes and overall DOE mission.

Our transforming energy landscape requires a Department of Energy for the 21st Century. We need an agency that is ready to shed its culture of scarcity and instead embrace a mindset of abundance and opportunity. We need a Department of Energy that will take full advantage of our newly discovered energy resources and capitalize on private sector expertise to modernize our energy systems. This includes continued oversight regarding U.S. export policies that impede U.S. participation in international energy projects and commerce. This is true not just for LNG and coal, but for nuclear suppliers, equipment, and renewables as well. Such a transition, if done properly, will spur dramatic economic growth, create thousands of good American jobs, make us significantly more energy secure, and set the United States down a path of becoming a global energy superpower.

Secretary Moniz, once again, congratulations on your appointment and, on behalf of the entire Committee on Energy and Commerce, we look forward to working with you over the next several years to achieve our common objectives.

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