



FROM: Kountoupes Denham Carr & Reid

DATE: Tuesday, June 10, 2025

RE: House Energy & Commerce Energy Subcommittee Hearing on The Fiscal Year 2026 Department of Energy Budget

Topline Summary

- Members of the House Energy and Commerce Energy subcommittee convened on Tuesday, June 10th, for a hearing on the Fiscal Year 2026 Department of Energy Budget. The hearing provided the committee with another opportunity to ask questions and receive a testimony from Secretary Chris Wright.
- Republicans Expressed concerns about the negative impacts of net-zero and clean energy policies on grid reliability, energy costs, and national security, particularly criticizing subsidies for intermittent sources like wind and solar. They emphasized the need to expand domestic fossil fuel and nuclear energy production, reduce regulatory burdens, and improve infrastructure (e.g., pipelines, transmission lines, enrichment facilities) to support energy independence and economic growth.
- Democrats Raised concerns about budget cuts to clean energy programs, including solar, wind, carbon capture, and energy efficiency, as well as the elimination of grants and staffing reductions that could hinder progress on climate and innovation goals. They criticized the rollback of support for low-income energy assistance, weatherization programs, and state energy offices, emphasizing the importance of affordability, regulatory certainty, and equitable energy access.
- Both Republicans and Democrats expressed support for modernizing and expanding energy infrastructure, including nuclear energy development, and agreed on the importance of improving permitting processes and utilizing the DOE's Loan Programs Office (LPO) to support reliable energy sources and meet growing electricity demand.

Members Attending: Chairman Bob Latta (R-OH), Vice Chairman Randy Weber (R-TX), Ranking Member Kathy Castor (D-FL), Full Committee Chairman Brett Guthrie (R-KY), Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ), Rep. Gary Palmer (R-AL), Rep. Rick Allen (R-GA), Rep. Troy Balderson (R-OH), Rep. August Pfluger (R-TX), Rep. Diana Harshbarger (R-TN), Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA), Rep. Russell Fry (R-SC), Rep. Nick Langworthy (R-NY), Rep. Gabe Evans (R-CO), Rep. Julie Fedorchak (R-ND), Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA), Rep. Rob Menendez (D-NJ), Rep. John Joyce (R-PA), Rep. Jennifer McClellan (D-VA), Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA), Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY), Rep. Marc Veasey (D-TX), Rep. Kim Schrier (D-WA)



[Live Hearing Link](#)

Meeting called to order by Chairman Latta.

Opening Statements

Chairman Bob Latta (R-OH): 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:

1. Unleash American energy dominance,
2. Lead the world in innovation and technological breakthroughs, and
3. 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 Communist 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.”

Ranking Member Kathy Castor (D-FL): Well, good morning, Mr. Secretary, it is our job to hold you accountable and ask questions and I appreciate you attending the briefing today to offer your budget. You know the president promise to cut electric bills in half, but utility bills are way up as is the risk of a resurgent inflation. Thanks to the administration policies. It always sounded way too good that electricity bills would be cut in half, but hard-working Americans did not expect you to actively work to make their lives more expensive, reach into their wallets and grab their hard cash and that’s effectively what your policies have done in just a few short months.

In addition to higher electric bills the US DOE is actively killing jobs. The US Department of energy once the envy of the world for innovation our national labs and focus on cleaner cheaper energy is killing jobs. Mr. Secretary, you inherited a department of energy that was advancing an energy manufacturing, boom 1,000 newer expanded factories across America 400,000 good paying jobs just over the past few years, America had a strategy to produce more energy reshore jobs modernized the grid invent the energy technologies of the future and build and scale them here in the United States.

This is smart policy, especially as energy essential to our national security, but you seem happy to seed the next generation of energy innovation, and leadership to our competitors like the Chinese communist party. We need you to answer why you and Republicans and Congress are intentionally sabotaging America’s progress and constraining our supply and fueling higher household energy bills on top of it all the administration is piling on arbitrary tariffs that’s making the energy sector more expensive because tariffs lead to increase cost and disruptions, ultimately impacting both consumers and the broader energy market.

DOE is supposed to be leading, innovation and security from grid resilience to critical minerals to renewable power to next generation renewable power but you and Elon Musk and DOGE have taken a chainsaw to the scientist, experts and congressionally mandated initiatives witnesses an expert testify before this committee consistently that we need to support expansion of electricity transmission infrastructure in the US because it’s critical to providing affordable, reliable power yet the big, ugly bills we affectionally call at the billionaire tax break package rescinds support for transmission facility financing electricity transmission, planning modeling. It takes back the grants to facilitate the siding of interstate electricity, transmission lines, and recent studies have shown that a comprehensive approach building transmission lowers cost for consumers in the northeast average electric bills could decrease by more than 1/3 New report released yesterday finds that every one-dollar spin on transmission returns up to \$4.70 in customer benefits.

In addition, two weeks ago, you canceled industrial demonstrations funded by Congress to cut carbon emissions, toxic air pollution from industrial sites and power plants do you claim these projects failed to Vance energy needs of the American people they’re not economically viable they don’t return a positive investment for taxpayers, but that is not true. Mr. chairman I ask unanimous consent to enter into the record report from the American council for energy efficient



economy that finds the industrial demonstrations would bring \$14 billion in private investment and keep industrial facilities competitive with countries around the world.

This dysfunction at the department of energy is killing investment in America look at the loan programs office which house Republicans tried to kill or trying to kill their big ugly bill the LPO is exactly the kind of tool. We need to provide low-cost financing two projects the traditional investors won't fund. However, since President Trump took office companies many who have spent years and millions of dollars to secure conditional LPO loan commitments are walking away they can no longer trust the department of energy to be a reliable partner or power.

We received a conditional loan to build a new lithium battery manufacturing facilities is canceled the project resulting in 3,000 lost American jobs. Aspen gels received a conditional loan to build a plant in Georgia to make thermal barriers for EV batteries, they've canceled the plant and instead expand production in China and Mexico, the list goes on and on and you know Americans expect policy makers like deploy taxpayer dollar dollars wisely spur cost saving and innovations and make people's lives better but your proposed budget fails to advance vision, and when an administration holds a vision based on propping up only dirty power sources, we lose Americas capacity to innovate and drive cost down which ultimately hurts American businesses and the American people so you have a lot to answer for today. I look forward to the exchange.

Full Committee Chairman Brett Guthrie (R-KY): Many people may not fully appreciate the functions the department perform in our government and your responsibilities as energy secretary. You oversee a national security agency and an energy security agency. DOE has designed and produced every nuclear warhead in the US arsenal. It powers the nuclear navy. It plays critical roles in non-proliferation, international nuclear security, and other energy security missions. DOE is a world class science, technology, and engineering agency. It is an environmental engineering and cleanup agency. It is an energy emergency support agency and produces essential energy information for our energy industry and public, as well as employing the fastest computers in the world. Its work is performed through a nation-spanning complex of national labs, production sites and facilities, and involves the largest contract work force outside of the Department of Defense.

Ensuring this agency operates efficiently can be a challenge. As the committees on oversight over the years have demonstrated. That said, successful management of DOE's missions and a focus on its core missions means America will be secure and stay ahead of our adversaries. You are taking charge of DOE at a critical time for the nation. Right now, we are fighting to achieve AI dominance. It is a technological race that we cannot afford to lose to China.

The threat of China succeeding at our expense equals, if not surpasses, the threats we faced almost 90 years ago in the race to harness atomic energy, which America fortunately won. The success of the Manhattan Project, a project that is in DOE's DNA, safeguarded our nation's security for two generations. We are confronting a similar treacherous time today. Over the past 4 years, our adversaries have been emboldened, China, in particular. Here at home, our nation confronts tremendous new demand for energy and a burning need to revitalize our energy sector.



We need energy and more of it. We need to build out the types of energy that we can rely on to power our technological needs, to support our allies, and to build our economy.

Against this backdrop, understanding how you plan to address the urgency of this moment is critical. Recent actions by the administration to supercharge the drive to restore our nuclear energy leadership, including at DOE, represent the kind of positive actions this nation needs. What will matter is how you execute these policies. So it is important to understand how you plan to manage the agency and align its budget to effectively meet your priorities and responsibilities, and to measure the results.

Every new administration takes steps to align DOE structure to meet its priorities. President Trump did it in his first term, President Obama did it twice. We should give you the flexibility to have the organization you need to be effective and to allow you to find efficiencies and agency management. We should not lose sight of the reality that the Department of Defense today operates about 35,000 more contractors and employees than it did 5 years ago. Most of that increased in the past 4 years. The agency used to put out a detailed annual performance report, but the last administration did not produce those reports, limiting accountability for measuring the results of work. Restoring accountability on that front would be welcome. And there certainly is room to be more efficient and effective across the agency and the enterprise for the sake of taxpayer stewardship.

Ultimately, what matters is aligning DOE to deliver the nuclear and energy security results that are most essential for the nation and to support the engineering and science that will help us sustain a prosperous future.

Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ): Today we're here to discuss the Department of Energy's fiscal year 2026 budget request. But the destruction of our national energy policy had already started before we received this flawed and harmful budget. It started on day one when Trump signed disastrous executive orders that halted federal grants and propped up polluting fossil fuels.

It continued with House Republicans passing the One Big Ugly Bill that eliminates programs that are lowering energy costs and helping to build clean energy manufacturing here in America – all so Republicans can give giant tax breaks to billionaires.

And now we have a Trump budget that will increase household energy costs, prioritize oil and gas, undermine clean energy, and gut energy assistance programs. At a time when energy demand is increasing, this budget will make it harder for our nation to meet the moment. Secretary Wright, welcome to the Energy and Commerce Committee. I have tried to get answers from you on a number of actions at DOE ranging from staffing cuts to project delays and funding freezes. But every single letter I have sent has gone unanswered. When appearing before a different committee, you seemed to indicate that you view responding to Congress as an optional part of your job. I want to be clear: it is not, and responding to this Committee is part of your responsibility to the American people.



After all, you owe them an explanation of your actions over the last six months. The agency has forced Americans to pay higher energy bills to keep outdated and expensive coal plants online. It is revoking energy and water efficiency standards that lower energy bills for American families. It cancelled \$3.7 billion in grants that would lower emissions from the industrial sector and create thousands of good-paying energy jobs.

DOE also threw open its doors for Elon Musk and his DOGE minions. Musk forced out more than 3,500 DOE staffers, and now the agency has lost experienced and valuable personnel with critical expertise.

And now, the Trump Administration sends Congress a budget request that hollows out DOE even more – slashing funding by more than 25 percent. It slashes funding for the Weatherization Assistance Program, zeroes out grants for renewable grid integration and wind and solar energy, and cuts loan programs for advanced vehicle technologies and tribal energy.

Mr. Secretary, in your confirmation hearing, you indicated that expanding the grid was, “important to securing and modernizing a resilient electricity grid to meet growing electricity demand.” But your budget proposal rescinds billions of dollars in investments in the nation’s power grid making it even more difficult for us to modernize and secure it for the future. The Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans claim to care about competing with China, but every action they take only leaves America further behind in the global energy leadership race. By freezing and cancelling investments in emerging clean energy technologies, the Trump Administration is letting China win. By undercutting manufacturing projects set to build electric vehicles and solar panels here in America, the Trump Administration is leaving the door wide open for our competitors. They are letting China further grow its own supply chains and its global market share. We were on the verge of a clean energy manufacturing renaissance, and the Trump Administration has ground it all to a halt.

And the Administration allowed its reckless alliance with Elon Musk and his DOGE minions to threaten the operations of the National Nuclear Security Administration and the Bonneville Power Administration. And now that the alliance has come to an end with an ongoing war of words on social media, the Administration now claims that Musk is only looking to support his financial interests. But they did NOT voice any concerns for Musk’s very real conflicts of interest when he was decimating our federal agencies, indiscriminately firing workers, all while covertly stealing Americans’ sensitive personal data. They didn’t seem to care about it then. Before I finish, Secretary Wright, it looks like you and I agree on at least one issue – that nuclear energy is worth investing in and that the Loan Programs Office has an important role to play. That’s something I hope you will reiterate with Committee Republicans today who don’t seem to share that view. In the One Big Ugly Bill, they completely zeroed out funding for DOE’s Loan Programs Office.

It also appears that even you have some concerns about this budget request. In testimony before the Senate last month, you asked Congress to send DOE the budget it needs, not the one you asked for. So, I question your support for the budget that you are here to defend.



I'm looking forward to finally getting some answers today and with that I yield back the balance of my time.

Witness

The Honorable Chris Wright, Secretary, Department of Energy

Testimony

Q&A

Chairman Bob Latta (R-OH) asked if we need more energy or less energy. Sec. Wright said we need more energy. Chairman Latta asked how the department is viewing the premature retiring of baseload energy and what are the consequences if we do not meet the moment. Sec. Wright said recent data for energy production in China has grown rapidly, while in the last 4 years the US has not grown their energy production but across the country electricity prices has increased by 25%. He continued that this is a pathway to losing the AI race, and the Trump administration recognizes this and is focused on unleashing private capital to grow and expand our supply of reliable energy. Chairman Latta asked for an update as to where things stand with the department's reorganization and the number of staff. Sec. Wright said the department grew by over 20% over the last administration with only an increase in the cost of electricity. He continued that they have followed a careful and thoughtful way to reorganize the department and bring down the head count, all of which has been done through voluntary measures. He said in the next few weeks they will get more clarity when the reorganization ends.

Ranking Member Kathy Castor (D-FL) spoke about the congressionally mandated energy star program that has been bipartisan in the past and acts as a key element in reducing cost and saving electricity. She continued that the department's budget cancels the program illegally, and in doing so does not save \$11 billion dollars but rather will cost taxpayers \$54 billion dollars. Ranking Member Castor asked how he justifies increasing the cost on Americans by \$54 billion. Sec. Wright said increasing energy efficiency is great, but the energy efficiency standards take away the ability from individuals and business to evaluate those tradeoffs. Ranking Member Castor said there are no mandates, and those individuals and businesses do have the ability to pick what appliances they want. Sec. Wright said they are not stopping anyone from purchasing the appliances they want. Ranking Member Castor argued otherwise that eliminating energy star and the attacks on energy efficient appliances. Ranking Member Castor spoke about the investments from China in low carbon steel, geothermal heat pumps, and green fertilizer. She then asked if cancelling our industrial demonstrations and letting China overtake us is good for our national security like he had previously said. Sec. Wright said it is crucial that United States lead in the technologies that matter. He continued that if the American taxpayer invests a dollar and is only expected to get a fraction of that back then that is not a pathway to win in a competitive marketplace



Full Committee Chairman Brett Guthrie (R-KY) said that one of the concerns with beating China in the AI race is that China's energy sector is expanding while that of the US is stagnant. He asked what the components of China's growth in energy are, to which Sec. Wright responded that coal is the biggest source of energy in China. Full Committee Chairman Guthrie asked if China is the world leader in de-carbonization and Sec. Wright replied that the US leads in this by far, saying that the US has reduced greenhouse gas emissions while using coal in a clean way. Full Committee Chairman Guthrie explained that the US needs 152 gigawatts of power over the next decade and has 112 gigawatts in coal scheduled to come offline. He asked what the DOE's concern is there, since not only will the US have to make up the 152 gigawatts needed, it will also need to create the 112 lost. Sec. Wright replied that this is a huge concern and that there has been almost no growth in electricity production over the last 4 years. Sec. Wright said that the US should not retire reliable energy sources while making up the need for increased power. Full Committee Chairman Guthrie asked for an explanation of the DOE provision in the One Big Beautiful bill. Sec. Wright explained that energy infrastructure construction is time consuming and projects are often stopped as presidential administrations change. Sec. Wright said that to build confidence for people to make long-term investments, the government will give back the money for projects if the government decision is driving the loss. Full Committee Chairman Guthrie concluded by noting that the number of DOE employees has increased by 35,000 over the past 5 years and Sec. Wright agreed that this number is inefficient.

Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ) noted that, last month, the DOE ordered 2 power plants burning coal, natural gas, and fuel oil to stay on-line mere days before they were scheduled to be permanently shut down. He asked who made the decision to issue those orders, to which Sec. Wright replied that he did. Full Committee Ranking Member Pallone said that keeping those plants open could cost homeowners and businesses 10s of millions. He noted that Sec. Wright's background is in oil and gas, so he asked why he made this decision despite the disagreement of grid operators and state utilities? Sec. Wright said that keeping the coal plant in MI open was important because there was a blackout in another part of the state later that week. Full Committee Ranking Member Pallone then discussed keeping funding for the loans program to support the DOE's goal of increasing nuclear power generation. He asked if it is possible to achieve this goal if the funding for the loans program is decreased, to which Sec. Wright replied that there is a funding request for the DOE to continue the program. Full Committee Ranking Member Pallone noted that the House reconciliation bill gets rid of this funding and Sec. Wright said that he would like to see the program continue.

Vice Chairman Randy Weber (R-TX) began by talking about how the keystone pipeline was killed by the Obama administration and that transporting the same amount of oil that the pipeline would have done would require 5300 18-wheelers per day. He then talked about how LNG exports are critical to the U.S. economy and how his district is a major hub. He said that since 2016, the U.S. has been the largest exporter of LNG and that has supported many jobs. He said that he was disappointed when USTR threatened suspension and said he is glad that USTR is



now working on removing penalties. Vice Chairman Weber asked Secretary Wright how the DOE would further support LNG exports and whether DDOE has authority over LNG export licenses. Secretary Wright answered that DOE does have the authority over LNG export licenses and talked about how LNG is the fastest growing energy source in the U.S. and that it is a huge economic driver. Vice Chairman Weber agreed and said that we need stable, affordable and reliable energy. He then talked about how petroleum reserves in his district were drawn down 60% during the Biden administration. He said that he is glad that the Trump administration is looking to reauthorize \$2 billion to replenish these reserves. He asked the Secretary whether what has been included in the reconciliation package will be enough to cover this. Secretary Wright said that it is definitely a start but they have to take into consideration that fact that many repairs are needed as well. He thanked the Congressman for the funding. Vice Chairman Weber expressed his appreciation that the administration is working to build up our energy supply.

Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA) began by talking about how FERC is the sole permitting agency for transmission lines. He said that previous administrations have not tapped into its full authority due to litigation. Rep. Peters asked Secretary Wright if he would bipartisan support permitting reform for large transmission lines, including establishing permitting parity at FERC between natural gas and transmission lines. Secretary Wright said that we certainly do need more energy infrastructure. Rep. Peters said that as many have said, we are facing an affordability and reliability crisis with our grid. He said that the grid is currently segmented in a way that makes it costly and inefficient. He then brought up a NERC study that showed how power outages due to natural disasters could be significantly reduced if we added 35 more gigawatts to our transmission capacity. He asked the Secretary whether he agreed with NERC's assessment. Secretary Wright said that he couldn't speak to specifics of the study but there is no doubt about the need for more transmission capacity. He noted that while this is a priority for him, building new transmission lines can take a while, and they are looking at improving current infrastructure. Rep. Peters said that one of the reasons this takes a while is that there is a lack of incentive for interregional cooperation. He asked the Secretary whether he could commit to working with him on this issue. The Secretary answered yes and said he looks forward to working with the Congressman. Rep. Peters then expressed concern that we are missing out on 20 gigawatts of energy capacity, 90% of which is clean energy, due to Republican efforts to remove clean energy subsidies/tax credits from the law. Secretary Wright said that we absolutely need to get rid of these subsidies as they are very outdated. Rep. Peters said that this changing of the law is ultimately hurting investors and reducing the amount of energy we can bring onto the grid.

Rep. Rick Allen (R-GA) asked how the office of energy efficiency and renewable energy refocused on core missions. Sec. Wright spoke about a tankless water heater factory that would have been shut down if the Biden rule was able to go into effect, he continued that he is for choice and opportunity. Rep. Allen asked if the previous administration weaponized EPCA for their anti-fossil agenda and how the department prioritizes consumer affordability when evaluating energy efficiency standards. Sec. Wright said one of the constraints is to follow the



law, and that EPCOT is the law, and it must be worked around. He continued that it has been weaponized and has led to the government choosing how they can heat themselves and what appliances they can use. Rep. Allen asked to expand on the conversations he had during his trip to the Middle East about US oil on the global market. Sec. Wright said two main topics were discussed the amount of capital they want to invest in our energy infrastructure and the energy supply demand that will be in the coming decades.

Rep. Rob Menendez (D-NJ) asked if it is correct that this administration has made it clear that they want to be energy dominant. Sec. Wright said yes. Rep. Menendez asked if the best way to achieve energy dominance is to use all the above approaches to energy production Sec. Wright said he never supported all the above because if something is going to make energy more expensive and less reliable, he would not support that. Rep. Menendez asked for sources that are more expensive and less reliable is why he is not for all the above, which would include renewable energy. Sec. Wright said all energy sources that will provide secure, affordable, reliable energy over the long term he is in favor of. Rep. Menendez asked if he would agree that energy affordability is an issue important to Americans. Sec. Wright said yes. Rep. Menendez asked if increased production, including renewables, drives cost down for all consumers. Sec. Wright said he does not agree and that has not been how the marketplace has worked. Rep. Menendez asked if he knew which state has had the most success in driving down energy costs. Sec. Wright said it depends on the baseline of where you begin, but Florida over the past 15 years has had little rise in their electricity price, whereas California has seen their bills more than double. Rep. Menendez spoke about Texas where electricity prices are expected to decrease and asked if he was aware of that. Sec. Wright said he was. Rep. Menendez asked if he knew where Texas Ranked in renewable energy deployment. Sec. Wright said it would be the largest because you can build things in Texas, he continued that it is dominantly a natural gas dominated grid but have huge amount of wind and solar power. Rep. Menendez spoke about the energy cost decline has more solar and wind power is deployed and asked if this price drop is good for Texans. Sec. Wright said declining energy prices is a good thing, but the 200,000 people who died in the blackout was very bad thing. Rep. Menendez asked if consumers are benefiting from lower energy prices from an increase in renewable energy. Sec. Wright said he does not believe that is a meaningful driver in reducing energy prices in Texas. Rep. Menendez asked him to explain. Sec. Wright said only if you can store it, and you must match supply and demand of energy needs. Rep. Menendez said Texas has been successful in that, increasing production of renewable energy and lower prices following. Sec. Wright said they are dominated by natural gas and natural gas prices have fallen. Rep. Menendez said Texas has legacy energy production and renewable energy, with lower prices following. Sec. Wright said lower prices are good, and renewables are not ruinous, but the drive down has not been driven by renewables. Rep. Menendez asked if he would recognize their contribution to bringing energy prices down. Sec. Wright said it is more complicated than it is. Rep. Menendez asked again if he is for an all the above approach to energy production. Sec. Wright said he is not opposed to renewable energy



and that he has worked in them and invested in them, but rather he is working to lower prices and keep grids stable rather than away for wealthy people to collect dollars from the government.

Rep. Troy Balderson (R-OH) said that natural gas exports have boosted domestic production and lowered prices for American consumers. He asked Sec. Wright to talk about the potential of US natural gas exports not only for allies, but also in regard to how boosting natural gas production can keep prices low for domestic consumers. Sec. Wright agreed with this premise, noting that the US has become the largest net exporter of natural gas and saying that it is the fastest growing export in the US. Rep. Balderson said that a lack of pipeline infrastructure is one of the greatest threats to the affordability of natural gas, asking how the DOE is working to prioritize pipeline development. Sec. Wright agreed with the importance of building new pipelines and said that he hopes to see 2 new ones under construction in the next month. Rep. Balderson concluded by asking about the broken cue process at the DOE. Sec. Wright explained that there is a major backlog of project requests in the cue and that the DOE is working to improve efficiency and prioritize impactful projects.

Rep. Jennifer McClellan (D-VA) was concerned with the impact of the administration's cuts to growing solar and wind projects, noting that experts agree that solar energy is the fastest and cheapest source of power. Rep. McClellan explained that 75 clean city coalitions work under the annual cooperative agreements to promote clean and affordable transportation opportunities. She said that these coalitions are still waiting for contracts and asked if the DOE was instructed to withhold information about the status of grants and contracts, to which Sec. Wright replied no. Rep. McClellan said that the DOE cancelled dozens of grants for carbon capture and de-carbonization issued by the office of clean energy and that the proposed budget eliminates the office completely. She asked if the DOE's subject matter experts were involved in this decision or if DOGE was in charge. Sec. Wright replied that it was the DOE and that he was involved with the review.

Rep. Diana Harshbarger (R-TN) began by talking about how Tennessee is a big state for nuclear services. She said that having nuclear fuel is necessary for our energy security. She then discussed the ban on Russian uranium and how there need to be waivers given we don't have the enrichment capabilities yet. She asked Secretary Wright whether the DOE was committed to continuing to implement the ban legislation, including waivers. The Secretary answered yes. He said that he agrees with the ban in general but should continue to allow for waivers until there are more commercial enrichment capabilities. Rep. Harshbarger then asked whether the admin is committed to implementing anti-circumvention legislation. Secretary Wright answered yes. Rep. Harshbarger then talked about 4 executive orders that came out that accelerate nuclear fuel in the U.S. She said that it establishes that building U.S. enrichment capabilities will take a few years. She mentioned that her district is home to BWXT nuclear fuel services. She talked about the unique capabilities that come with nuclear fuel and asked the Secretary if he had heard that it was identified that feedstock material could deliver 20 metric tons through down blending.



Secretary Wright answered that he believed so but would double-check and follow up. Rep. Harshbarger then asked the Secretary what the DOE is doing with the industry to further these efforts. Secretary Wright said that they are doing industry engagement in the nuclear fuel space. Rep. Harshbarger asked what NNSA is doing to advance unobligated enrichment for national security. Secretary Wright responded that enrichment is being used for weapons programs and talked about how Tennessee is a nuclear powerhouse.

Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO) began by talking about how the Trump administration seems to have quite lofty energy goals, specifically when it comes to nuclear. She said that she worked on the bipartisan ADVANCE Act and is a big proponent of expanding nuclear in a safe and properly reviewed manner. She said that however, while the administration is talking about expanding nuclear they are simultaneously cutting staff from the NRC. She said that this is very worrisome and asked the Secretary how the administration expects to achieve its goals when there are over 20% reductions to the NRC workforce. Secretary Wright answered that it isn't quite 20%. Rep. DeGette countered that it is actually 24%. She said that budget cuts will also reduce funding for the Advanced Reactors Demonstration Program by half and asked him to confirm this. Secretary Wright responded that the program is phasing down. Rep. DeGette said that she took that answer as a yes. She then talked about how 20% of DOE staff are now gone due to the firing of probationary employees and asked him to confirm this. Secretary Wright said that he had no final numbers. Rep. DeGette asked the Secretary whether there was a hiring freeze at the DOE to which he answered yes. She then turned to 3 EOs that the White House released that direct the DOE to bring 3 new reactors to criticality by July of 2026 and asked Secretary Wright to elaborate on how the administration plans to meet these goals. He said that he hasn't been in front with the EOs and is not sure with the specifics but knows the administration has aggressive goals with nuclear. Rep. DeGette said that she never asks incorrect questions, to which the Secretary responded that he wishes he was that flawless. Rep. DeGette asked him how they were going to bring 3 reactors to criticality by 2026 given all of the cuts. Secretary Wright said that they are demonstration reactors. She confirmed that this meant they were not producing any energy. Secretary Wright confirmed. He also said that NRC efficiency wasn't necessarily tied to staffing levels. Rep. DeGette concluded by requesting the Secretary to send her a written plan on these demonstration reactors.

Rep. August Pfluger (R-TX) asked for big picture priorities that have been set forth to meet the coming demand for electricity. Sec. Wright said over the years we have created huge regulatory burdens for building infrastructure, which adds to the time and cost required resulting in less of these projects. He added that US oil and natural gas production was at an all-time high in 2023 because that was predominantly on private and state land, not federal land. He continued that if you build a new clean energy plant you need to have carbon capture in the ground in 11 years, a technology we don't have at scale and uses too much energy themselves. Rep. Pfluger asked for an update on the LNG export pipeline. Sec. Wright said he would need to check in on that because it would not be just DOE involved. Rep. Pfluger asked what Congress can do to ensure



that 300 billion barrels flow out doesn't happen again. Sec. Wright said he does not have a good answer for the legislative fix, but it is dialogue that can be had. He continued that there was damage to facilities from drawing oil to fast that will cost hundreds of millions of dollars, reduction in our national security, and a reduction in the confidence of the United States, and our credibility about how we view energy and our national security.

Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA) asked if it is a priority for the administration to strengthen our critical minerals supply chain. Sec. Wright said reshoring manufacturing in a top priority of this administration. Rep. Matsui asked if 45X tax credit is critical to reshoring battery and critical mineral supply chains. Sec. Wright said reshoring manufacturing will not dominantly be about tax policy, but rather regulatory landscape, but the credit could be helpful in that. Rep. Matsui said spoke about companies speaking out for the tax credit and against the restrictions proposed, requiring nearly every component to be traced back to the original source, saying they will essentially act as a repeal of the credit. Rep. Matsui asked based on his own operation of several companies if he could seriously meet the requirements. Sec. Wright said if you want resource the manufacturing sector of the United States you don't want companies that are pass through entities for foreign countries and called it a sticky subject but its not so black and white. Rep. Matsui asked if Liberty Energy can meet the requirements. Sec. Wright said at Liberty Energy they were not involved in government subsidies and could not answer the question. Rep. Matsui asked if it was accurate that he invested in Fervo, a leading geothermal company. Sec. Wright said that is correct. Rep. Matsui asked if it is correct that Trump included geothermal in executive orders. Sec. Wright said yes. Rep. Matsui asked if it is correct that he called for maintaining the clean energy tax credits for geothermal. Sec. Wright said that is correct and believes geothermal should be included with nuclear. Rep. Matsui asked if he would call member to urge the protection of clean energy tax credits for geothermal. Sec. Wright said he has been doing just that.

Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA) noted that the DOE budget requested \$750 million in new credit subsidy while cutting administrative expenses in half. Since the program currently has 122 applications requesting billions in funding, she asked for an explanation as to how the DOE will process these applications with decreased personnel. Sec. Wright said that there are always more requests than the DOE can achieve, but that they will focus on the projects that are the most beneficial to the US energy system and to taxpayers. Rep. Miller-Meeks said that funding was reduced for the biotechnology program and, given the importance of sustainable aviation fuel, asked what strategy is being used to expand the development and deployment of sustainable fuels so that the US does not fall behind other countries. Sec. Wright said that the DOE wants to support technological advancement to make biofuels more efficient.

Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY) asked what role he envisions the DOE playing to support state partners. He confirmed Sec. Wright's agreement to the following in a series of yes or no questions: that states have a responsibility in supporting energy emergency planning, in



cybersecurity, in providing technical analyses for public utility commissions proceedings, and in addressing energy affordability challenges. Rep. Tonko noted that the budget request zeroes out Office of State Energy programs, asking how the administration will reconcile the need for states to do important energy work while eliminating the funds that enable it. Sec. Wright replied that it is more logical for state governments to fund the state energy offices. Rep. Tonko expressed his concerns about DOE staff decreases and the slowing down of the grant review process. He asked for insights into what is going on in SCEP and asked if the DOE is committed to getting previously appropriated funds allocated to states in a timely manner. Sec. Wright said that SCEP funding is done on an annual basis and delivered in July and that the DOE is working to make that goal. Rep. Tonko said that the DOE has a critical role in promoting energy affordability, especially through energy efficiency. He said that, in May, the DOE claimed to be saving \$11 billion through elimination and reduction of 47 rules, but that according to the DOE's own analysis, just 12 efficiency standards would save more than \$54 billion. So, people would see an increase in net costs. Rep. Tonko explained that this is illegal because there is a law that forbids the DOE from weakening energy efficiency standards once they are finalized and asked if Sec. Wright is aware of this law. Sec. Wright said that the legal team at the DOE is complying with all laws.

John James (R-MI) began by talking about how Republicans are working to advance an all-of-the-above energy approach and expressed his enthusiasm towards working with Secretary Wright. He talked about how NERC's Long Term Reliability Study shows that shifts to intermittent sources of energy will leave us at risk of energy shortages and increased costs. He asked the Secretary whether he is seeing instances of how net zero policies have led to increased costs. Secretary Wright answered yes, citing an example of a coal plant in Michigan. He identified many of these closures as means of virtue signaling and as part of a political agenda rather than a logical decision. Rep. James asked if him whether these are premature closures to which the Secretary answered yes. Rep. James then asked the Secretary to articulate the administration's reasoning for the emergency order of the JH Campbell coal plant. Secretary Wright said that this was issued because it was clear that the closure would lead to severe reliability and cost issues, and cited that their Midwest system operator, MISO, has the lowest reserve margin. He said that just two days after the order was announced to reopen the plant, there was a blackout. Rep. James said he appreciated the administration's quick reaction and asked if there was anything else the Secretary wanted to mention. Secretary Wright said that Rep. James said it well and shares his vision. He concluded by saying we need to stop reliance on intermittent sources.

Rep. Marc Veasey (D-TX) said that the FY 26 budget proposal guts many programs that help the country become more energy dominant. He talked about how there doesn't seem to be a clear plan to deal with mass deportations in the Permian Basin. He said that 13% of the workforce in oil companies in this region are undocumented migrants. He asked Secretary Wright about what part of the budget will account for this massive workforce reduction due to mass deportations.



Secretary Wright said that there is no doubt that these are tremendous, hardworking people, but said he wasn't sure that the 13% number was necessarily accurate across the board based on his experience running an energy company. Rep. Veasey asked if this was because the company hired workers through a third party. Secretary Wright answered that all of their workers were hired directly, and E-Verify was used to verify their legal status. Rep. Veasey then asked Secretary Wright if he would support President Trump bringing in the National Guard to Midland if there was an ICE raid with a similar outcome to Los Angeles. Secretary Wright said that there is a clear distinction that needs to be made between legal and illegal immigrants. Rep. Veasey asked if it is easier to "drill baby drill" with no workers or work around a couple of EPA regulations. Secretary Wright said that you need many employees.

Rep. Cliff Bentz (R-OR) mentioned the 36,000 and 16,000 continuous megawatts the dams in Oregon generate. He continued about the MOU the Biden administration implemented that would take rate payer dollars and put them towards building solar panels to offset the breach in the future and shared his disapproval for the dam's breach. Rep. Bentz asked if he is up to date on the issue. Sec. Wright said he is and has been working on the issue for several weeks now. He continued that generations have benefited from hydro power, that simply can't be replaced with wind or solar. Rep. Bentz asked about the dam's function as a gigantic storage device, which is hugely important to intermittent power. Sec. Wright said it is hugely important to our grid, and can reduce the damage of intermittent power sources, but even without intermittent power sources you need to have the ability to have higher power generation at peak times and lower times. Rep. Bentz what is the department's plan to catch up with China when we have a flat production curve compared to theirs that is essentially shooting straight up. Sec. Wright said we need to change the direction of this country during the last four years billions have been spent to subsidize the installation of intermittent sources. He added that they are trying to reduce the barrier for reliable dispatchable sources such as hydropower and reduce the subsidies. Rep. Bentz asked him to address the situation that you need to have a backup for intermittent power driving up the cost. Sec. Wright said that it is correct, and we are inadvertently making all other sources that must be used as backups.

Rep. Kim Schrier (D-WA) discussed the challenges being faced by Bonneville, and the DOGE actions taken to the plant despite it being 100% rate payer funded. Rep. Schrier asked if he was aware of the Bonneville work staff shortage before this years, staffing reductions. Sec. Wright said he was aware of the shortage. Rep. Schrier asked for his thought process if he already knew about the shortage and not being able to save money off a smaller staff. Sec. Wright said the headcount at Bonneville as been discussed about the longer-term problem when he met with them last week and was not meaningfully different today from when he arrived. He added that they are working on how they can grow the number of linemen working there. Rep. Schrier asked for his commitment to lift the hiring freeze. Sec. Wright said he is working with the administration and is working to hire more linemen at Bonneville. Rep. Schrier asked for the commitment to hire linemen and others who will build and hold the expertise that they really



depend on. Sec. Wright said they will work with Bonneville to work with them through these times.

Rep. Craig Goldman (R-TX) discussed the nuclear reactor permitted to be built at Abilene Christian University. He said that the DOE committed to providing fuel and salt for the project in 2019 and asked if they would support this project by following through on that commitment. Sec. Wright replied that the DOE is working with the University to accommodate the request. Rep. Goldman asked how the DOE budget request increases support for universities, technical, and community colleges to train the next generation of nuclear scientists and workers to support the goal of nuclear buildout. Sec. Wright said this is a key issue and that he wants to get young people excited to go into this industry. He said that building reactors, funding research, and efficiency in the communications space will all help to sustain and grow the industry. Rep. Goldman confirmed with Sec. Wright that wind and solar energy are subsidized, while nuclear, coal and gas are not. Rep. Goldman asked how TX should go about creating more power and Sec. Wright said that they should follow through with an option that provides 24/7 power.

Rep. Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX) noted that her district represents Houston, which she called the energy capital of the world. She said that she is hearing from her constituents that they need to know the rules and regulations to trust that their long-term projects can move forward and get the approvals they need. While she agreed that permitting reform is necessary, she said permitting and investment certainty are necessary to plan investments. Rep. Fletcher said that the administration's focus on bringing in private capital is not realistic in the current environment. Finally, Rep. Fletcher discussed the impact of winter storm Uri on TX in 2021, noting that most outages were from natural gas, not renewable fuel. She noted that the budget includes a cut to natural gas infrastructure and hydrogen technology programs and asked if that includes weatherization research and development. Rep. Fletcher ran out of time, so the answer to her question will be submitted to the record.

Rep. Julie Fedorchak (R-ND) said that she appreciates the Secretary's work in letting the energy industry grow. She expressed her support for him and talked about how NERC has determined that 2/3 of our systems are not going to be enough to meet demand. She said that she has introduced the Baseload Reliability Act that will give the DOE the tools to slow down retirements. She invited his support and talked about the need to actively track planned retirement and grid impacts. She asked Secretary Wright whether this was something the DOE was already tracking. The Secretary answered that they were in fact tracking this and thanked her for her thoughtful approach to energy policy. He said that there is no "clean energy" or "dirty energy" because all sources of energy come with tradeoffs. He talked about how there is a desire to build more and more data centers and that that we need to make sure demand is met and ensure that FERC is easier to navigate. He added that they are looking into when and why plants are retiring as well. Rep. Fedorchak said that her bill would make his work law and talked about how the retiring of reliable baseload energy needs to not be falling on ratepayers. She encourage



bipartisan permitting reform and said that using the abundant energy resources that we have shouldn't be partisan.

Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) began by talking about how she felt there have been insinuations that the fossil fuel industry does not benefit from government subsidies just as clean energy projects have. Secretary Wright said that they have not in the same magnitude and that there are no meaningful subsidies for oil and gas. Rep. Ocasio-Cortez said that just didn't seem to be true, citing that in 2022 there was between 10 and 52 billion dollars in subsidies provided to the fossil fuel industry. She added that oil and gas companies have been allowed to lease land for pennies on the dollar, which she said is basically an indirect subsidy. She then turned to the issue of immigration, asking Secretary Wright on his stance of the government being able to end someone's legal status. Rep. Wright said that immigration doesn't fall in the scope of his work to the extent in which he can provide a good answer. Rep. Ocasio-Cortez said that the administration is trying to end path-to-work permits, something crucial to the fossil fuel industry workforce. She asked the Secretary whether he supports this. Secretary Wright reiterated that he can't provide a great answer given that immigration falls outside the scope of his work. Rep. Ocasio-Cortez then asked him whether lower oil prices were better, to which the Secretary answered yes. She then asked if stock prices should be prioritized over that. Secretary Wright answered that consumers should not have to worry about stock prices but there are natural market mechanisms in play. Rep. Ocasio-Cortez asked about his stance on tariffs and how they are increasing production costs. Secretary Wright said that in the long run, the President's plan is going to lead to meaningfully lower costs and will reshore manufacturing. Rep. Ocasio-Cortez then began to ask about the 50% tariffs on steel which are important to the fossil fuel industry and asked the Secretary how the plan aligns with reducing prices. Her time expired and she stated she would submit the question for the record.

Rep. Russell Fry (R-SC) asked what specific actions he would like the committee to make sure the loan programs office can fully support this next wave of nuclear development. Sec. Wright said the nuclear power industry has been hampered by a growing regulatory burden. He added that we need reasonable regulation, and that we all want to protect the environment and human health. Rep. Fry asked how the committee can make sure advancement from the loan program office can occur. Sec. Wright said they have put in a request for a \$750 million credit subsidy request if that got raised up and if his lending authority to support nuclear power plants got increased that would be very helpful. Rep. Fry asked how he envisions the department supporting utilities and developers trying to build out grid infrastructure that can handle nuclear and datacenters particularly in rural areas. Sec. Wright said permitting reform is very important, we need to be able to build transmission lines or even just reconducting transmission lines, we need to be able to build that infrastructure.

Rep. Jake Auchincloss (D-MA) asked if he would agree that one of the roles in government to make markets work better is establishing technology neutral policy with clear, consistent,



predictable regulation. Sec. Wright said clear and consistent regulation is great for industry. Rep. Auchincloss asked about technology neutral. Sec. Wright said it depends on what you mean by that word. Rep. Auchincloss asked if markets should be able to decide if a project or industry is going to work and if they can do it why should the government cancel that. Sec. Wright said it is a complicated question. Rep. Auchincloss asked if agreed with Secretary Burgum on placing a moratorium on offshore wind projects, and shouldn't they be able to take on the risk if they believe it might work. Sec. Wright said the question is who is taking on the risk. He continued that the history of offshore wind has been a trainwreck, resulting in higher electricity prices and less stable grids. Rep. Auchincloss asked if it sends a good signal that investors can put in hundreds of millions of dollars and have their project thrown out the next day. Sec. Wright said it is a challenging issue on what the right thing to do with wind power, and the growing outrage about the spectacle. Rep. Auchincloss asked if he would encourage the senate and the house to restore the LPOs credit ability to issue loans. Sec. Wright said he would but would need to be cautious and judicious with how funds are disbursed, but a helpful tool. Rep. Auchincloss the types of technology in nuclear and geothermal he is excited about. Sec. Wright said energy should be about humans and math, using dry rock and depth of shale wells is rapidly becoming commercially viable. Rep. Auchincloss asked about the millimeter technology who are trying to go 7-10 miles deep. Sec. Wright they are super exciting and are in earlier stages but that type of research should be supported and could be a big deal.

Rep. Gary Palmer (R-AL) discussed the issue of access to critical and rare Earth minerals, saying that the US's dependence on other countries for these elements is a threat to national security and the economy. He asked Sec. Wright to address the power needs that will be required of the US if it in-shores processing and refineries for rare Earth elements. Sec. Wright said that China has owned this supply chain for decades, making the US vulnerable. Sec. Wright agreed that processing and refining should be done in the US to ensure a domestic supply of these minerals. Rep. Palmer noted that the US needs to build out its generation abilities to process heavy elements. He said that many coal and carbon power generation facilities were shuttered but retain transmission capacity that could be used for processing and refinement of rare Earth elements. Sec. Wright said that this would be a good idea and that energy intensive facilities need a reliable source of energy. Rep. Palmer said that this processing cannot be done with renewable energy and Sec. Wright agreed.

Rep. Kevin Mullin (D-CA) said that the national electricity rates will increase by 5% at the end of the year and that the budget request will make energy even more expensive. Rep. Mullin asked about the DOE's plan to protect consumers from increases in energy bills. Sec. Wright replied that the DOE needs to do everything they can to unleash more energy production in the US and decrease regulatory burdens. He said that the administration has done a lot to change the trajectory on energy prices going forward and that most energy prices today are lower than they were a year ago. Sec. Wright also said that it is untrue that getting rid of subsidies will make energy more expensive, since wind and solar subsidies increase electricity costs. Rep. Mullin



noted that amidst increasing costs of electricity, the DOE has proposed to eliminate programs that help families with their bills, such as the weatherization assistance program and the low-income energy assistance program. When asked why the DOE eliminated these programs, Sec. Wright replied that he is also passionate about lowering the cost of energy for low-income families. He said that the policies of the last several years have forced unreliable sources of energy onto the grid, making it more expensive to operate. Rep. Mullin recalled that, during his confirmation, Sec. Wright said that he follows the data on the evolution of climate change and that the energy systems need to change in order to accommodate it. However, he noted that the budget rolls back billions from innovation initiatives for clean energy programs. He asked if Sec. Wright believes that the DOE should have a role in cutting emissions and protecting Americans from the impacts of climate change. Sec. Wright replied that the way out of emissions is to move to new energy technology and increase focus on natural gas and nuclear power. He said that making electricity expensive increases poverty and decreases industry instead of fighting climate change.

Rep. Gabe Evans (R-CO) began by talking about how there is a lot of oil and gas in his district. He asked how they can also increase the geothermal workforce given that there is a lot of potential for geothermal in Colorado. Secretary Wright said that a lot of the technologies used for oil and natural gas drilling can also be used for geothermal. He said that there is potential for many oil and gas companies to help develop geothermal. He noted that there is a 400 megawatt geothermal project in Utah and it exemplifies the kind of work that could also be done in Colorado. Rep. Evans then raised the issue of retiring baseload power. He asked the Secretary to speak on the importance of variable power to meet energy demands in conjunction with baseload power. Secretary Wright talked about how solar can be particularly helpful at certain times and can help lower costs when conditions are optimal. He said that this can be complemented by the baseload power and said he feels the solar industry can continue to help meet energy needs. He said that solar should not need any subsidies, advocating for markets to be able to work on their own. Rep. Evans then talked about how we need a new nuclear reactor design, asking what Congress can do to help. Secretary Wright answered that Congress can support their demonstration project in Idaho and work to create a more efficient NRC by permitting reform. He said that he is optimistic of nuclear's future.

Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA) talked about how his district is a very promising location for battery production and critical minerals. He said that there is an abundance of solar, wind and geothermal energy in his district which allows for both power and clean air for his constituents. He said that some of the budget cuts will have a major impact on his district. He said that he wants to ensure that rural communities like the ones he serves are included in the country's energy future. He then talked about how his district is home to the world's 5th largest lithium deposit and that the area is known as "lithium valley". He said that to put this quantity into context, the amount of lithium in these reserves alone could be used for the batteries of 3 million electric vehicles. He said that he knows that a lot of his colleagues across the aisle aren't big fans of EVs but that this



lithium is also crucial for AI and other future technologies. He said that there is much need for more development in infrastructure for these rural communities to make all of this a reality. He asked Secretary Wright how the DOE will ensure funding reaches rural areas like his. The Secretary said that affordable, reliable power is extremely important, expressing that it is a top priority of his and the administration. He agreed that including and investing in these rural communities is crucial. Rep. Ruiz then invited Secretary Wright to visit his district to see the progress. He said that there has been lots of bipartisan support of development of this region. Secretary Wright said that he definitely would once he figures out his schedule. He also said that he wanted to clarify that he and the administration do not at all oppose EVs, they just don't think they should be subsidized. He said that he thinks they are innovative and have many benefits.

Rep. Nick Langworthy (R-NY) asked what action the department is taking or planning to take to reset the direction of the DOE's state energy office funding to better support affordability, reliability, and tech neutrality. Sec. Wright said he would need to get back to him on that. Rep. Langworthy asked if DOE has considered creating a funding category for states looking to expand dispatchable energy, modernize their grids baseload, or preserve affordability. Sec. Wright said their funding has not been state by state but rather project by project. He added that projects that will deliver affordable energy, drive down energy costs, and add to supply are the types of project they are looking to support. Rep. Langworthy asked how the department has interpreted the executive order titled protecting American energy from state overreach, and has the department identified any state level energy mandates or regulation that have been inconsistent with the federal interest. Sec. Wright said they have been looking at that with their legal team but spoke about focusing on New York as their actions affect not only their state but also the surrounding area of New England.

Rep. Troy Carter (D-LA) spoke about a previous hearing where he said he was not for all the above strategy personally. Rep. Carter asked which is it and if they can count on him to be for all of the above. Sec. Wright said he has been about improvement and innovation for energy his whole life. He added that he has never been for all the above, energy is too important to mean everything. Rep. Carter asked if he was against wind. Sec. Wright said he is against energy sources that make the energy system more expensive and less reliable. He continued that solar has applications all across the world and added that wind may even have applications in certain energy systems. Rep. Carter said that it sounds like all the above and can be used at different scales for different systems. Sec. Wright said what we have done with the subsidies for wind and solar have mostly been negative. Rep. Carter asked him to commit to revisiting his state's HERO project and their \$250 million grants that have been suspended. Sec. Wright said they will look into that together.

Rep. John Joyce (R-PA) discussed the need for the US to remain ahead of China in the AI race, noting that data centers could consume 10% of all electricity by the end of the decade. He explained that PA has the natural gas to meet the increasing demand for energy needed to help



beat China in the AI race. Rep. Joyce noted that a major challenge for the DOE will be balancing new energy demands for data centers with maintaining reliability for the electric grid. He asked how the DOE can collaborate with state government and authorities to ensure the timely development and connection of new base load power so that legacy systems can be taken offline as planned. Sec. Wright noted that he just spent time converting a legacy plant last week. He also agreed that winning the AI race is necessary and that the DOE is trying to eliminate roadblocks to achieve this goal. Rep. Joyce said that part of ensuring a reliable power grid is creating an inviting and predictable environment for new infrastructure investment. He noted that the review process is lengthy and that even projects aligned with the goals of the administration can be left in an unsteady environment for a long time. He asked how the DOE can provide more confidence to stakeholders who need to make time-sensitive investment decisions while working through the investigation of waste, fraud, and abuse. Sec. Wright said that the DOE is working as fast as they can and that, by the end of the summer, they will have clarity on most of the big projects.

Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI) noted that since the IRA was signed into law, MI has led the clean energy auto manufacturing boom. She said that, under the Trump administration, \$14.2 billion has been stalled or cancelled in MI, jeopardizing more than 2,600 jobs. Rep. Dingell said that repealing clean energy tax credits risks almost \$40 billion in MI investments alone. She stressed that China is subsidizing EV manufacturing, and that the US should not give up its EV market share. Rep. Dingell asked if forfeiting this share of the market to China is a fair market strategy, if the DOE has data saying that cancelling these interests helps US competitiveness, and if the job costs are worthwhile. Sec. Wright said that he wants to re-industrialize MI and that, through tariffs, the US will stop China's unfair advantage in the EV market. Rep. Dingell concluded by saying that Sec. Wright should come to MI and help her improve the reputation of EVs to prevent China from destroying the US auto industry.

Chairman Latta brought the hearing to a close.