



FROM: Kountoupes Denham Carr & Reid

DATE: Thursday, April 16, 2026

RE: House Energy & Commerce Energy Subcommittee Hearing on The Fiscal Year 2027
Department of Energy Budget

Topline Summary

- On Thursday, April 16, 2026, the House Energy and Commerce Energy Subcommittee convened for a hearing on the Fiscal Year 2027 Department of Energy Budget.
- Over the course of the hearing the representatives covered the war in Iran and its impacts on global energy/gas prices, DOE budget priorities and grant cancellations, nuclear energy expansion and SMR development, grid reliability and pipeline infrastructure, strategic petroleum reserve (SPR) management and clean energy disputes.
- Republicans focused on ensuring American energy dominance through fossil fuels and nuclear, criticizing Biden-era policies for driving up prices. They cheered on investments in SMRs, LNG exports, and natural gas pipelines. Republicans also highlighted grid reliability concerns from aggressive state-level clean energy mandates.
- Democrats fought to defend cancelled clean energy and IRA grants, while challenging the legality of administration's ability to cancel projects. They continued to pressure the administration on rising gas/electricity prices since the Iran conflict began, and raised concerns about DOE budget cuts to LIHEAP, weatherization, cybersecurity, and APRA-E programs

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. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA), Rep. Gabe Evans (R-CO), Rep. Jennifer McClellan (D-VA), Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA), Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA), Rep. Gary Palmer (R-AL), Rep. Russell Fry (R-SC), Rep. Kim Schrier (D-WA), Rep. Kevin Mullin (D-CA), Rep. Troy Balderson (R-OH), Rep. August Pfluger (R-TX), Rep. Jake Auchincloss (D-MA), Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO), Rep. Diana Harshbarger (R-TN), Rep. Marc Veasey (D-TX), Rep. Craig Goldman (R-TX), Rep. John James (R-MI), Rep. Julie Fedorchak (R-ND), Rep. John Joyce (R-PA) & Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY)

[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 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.



While the previous Administration sought to end the use of fossil fuels, your Department has unleashed American energy, like liquefied natural gas, and reversed unnecessary regulations that attack fossil fuel use.

I look forward to a discussion on how your energy and technology priorities will benefit the American people.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Ranking Member Kathy Castor (D-FL): Thank you. Mr. Chairman, welcome Mr. Secretary Mr. Secretary the policies of the Trump Administration have made life very expensive for our neighbors back home. It is truly soul crushing what they are experiencing right now. Electric bills are way up under the Trump Administration.

Household electric bills have risen as much as 13% nationally, and utilities are imposing massive rate hikes. Trump's war in Iran has sent an energy shock rippling through the economy with huge price hikes. Energy inflation is up 10.9% that's the highest in 20 years. Gas prices jumped 21 over 21% in March alone, the biggest increase since records began in 1967 Americans are grappling with wildly higher gas and diesel prices.

And you know, consumer goods are transported across the country by trucks running on diesel, so folks are bracing for higher costs for consumer goods too. The pain in the pocketbook comes at a rotten time for hard working Americans. They're already paying more due to arbitrary and illegal Trump tariffs, and over the past few days, Republicans have been celebrating the big, ugly bill, but the impact has been devastating when it comes to energy bills for our neighbors back home, because to pay for tax cuts for billionaires, Republicans in Congress rolled back many of the clean energy initiatives from the Inflation Reduction Act, which have been helping consumers save on. Energy cost.

The Trump Administration, the GOP eliminated tax credits for solar, wind, electric vehicles and home efficiency upgrades. So altogether, what is happening is you're really sticking hard working Americans with higher electric bills. And despite on top of all that, despite higher energy demand, the need to lower prices the Department of Energy has effectively killed cleaner, cheaper energy projects, some fully permitted and under construction, to the point that the country meant, in many places, was grappling with a shortage of power, and rate payers are paying even higher electric bills, and it's troubling that the DOE is making it all the more expensive by forcing expensive, dirty coal plants to stay online, counter to the plans of utility state regulators and grid operators due to the cost of ongoing operation. But you know who's making out like bandits through all this?

Oil and Gas executives, the Wall Street Journal recently reported that Trump's war in Iran is yielding a windfall for American top oil executives, particularly CEOs who have pocketed get this over the past couple months, \$1.4 billion when the chevron chief executive sold shares, he pocketed \$104 million Conoco's Phillips CEO net at about 54.3 million in March alone, the CEO



of Baker Hughes sold about \$33 million worth of stock during the same month. Trump. The Trump Administration and fossil fuel executives certainly have consumers over the barrel more ways than one. You know this Trump energy crisis almost seems intentional, and this is a context for the President's proposed budget.

Aside from the NSA, you're proposing an 11% cut in areas that help consumers save like full elimination of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program and the weatherization program that this committee reauthorized in a bipartisan fashion last year, you proposed to cut initiatives for critical minerals, geothermal energy and hydropower. Those are bipartisan that we all support. That seems backwards as usual as usual. The only thing that the administration reliably supports are polluters.

The President's budget proposes 23 million to subsidize the dying coal industry. It requests over almost \$2 billion for a new base little power account to preserve coal, oil and gas industries. At best, the policy priorities from the DOE and the administration are incoherent. At worst, they pose real risk to US energy, reliability and resilience.

You know, you've lost a lot of employees. They were Doug Ed, they were fired. Now DOE faces a historic labor shortage. It calls into question whether you can administer the law as Congress intended.

You've now, you've lost so many people that now, rather than address it, you request new power for political appointees alone to make these decisions, and this opens the door to more corruption and grift that has become a hallmark of the Trump Administration. This budget does nothing to help hard working American families. In fact, it actively hurts them. It's a budget that will leave the United States further behind our competitors in the global energy race, while callously telling Americans Good luck to you as they continue to scrape by.

Our neighbors back home deserve better, Mr. Secretary they deserve cheaper, more affordable, reliable, clean energy.

I hope you can answer these questions, because we have a lot of them today. I yield back.

Full Committee Chairman Brett Guthrie (R-KY): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you Mr. Secretary for being here. Glad to have you before us today. Your testimony is especially important given the timely world events and impact on energy markets as it's the Trump Administration came into to being and our committee reform this last year, we were able to get the energy policies in place that got oil down to about \$60 a barrel, and that was never anywhere close during the Biden Administration, where people had affordable access to energy. But we do know, with Iran choking the flow of oil, gas and other critical markets, that has raised the price of energy for Europe.

For us, product trouble, Gim products Europe to Asia and other markets, and we're facing a crisis now of energy prices, but the stability and the place we have is \$60 barrel oil. That's where we should get back to when we get beyond where we are and we've been the. Arm of energy was organized for this specific reason right before the Islamic Revolution in Iran. And we've all long known about Iran's explicit threat to America and to our allies.



And we all knew that it had to be addressed, and President Trump has addressed it, but clearly I ran disruption of global markets is increasing prices here at home. So understanding how DOE is addressing supply constraints as a result, and how its work will help ensure long term affordability will be part of our discussion today. And of course, there is but one of many pressing issues China. China still threatens to disrupt geopolitical relationships around the world and to overtake technological leadership, particularly in the race for AI dominance and innovation, and here at home, our nation still faces tremendous new demand for energy. There's a burning need to revitalize an energy system long suffering from misguided policies that undermine reliable, affordable power and prioritize technologies that depend on taxpayer subsidies and handouts, success requires energy addition. Building the reliable afforded systems that leverage our abundant sources of energy is critical. So, Mr. Secretary you testified last year that access, quote, access to an abundant and reliable energy supply as a key ingredient to unlocking prosperity and ensuring human flourishing and innovation. unquote, that's refreshing and powerful message should be at the center of our nation's energy policy in DOE technological work. Let's focus on how best to do this. I'll yield back,

Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ): Thank you. Chairman Latta, the Trump Administration's energy policy Secretary Wright, has been an absolute failure. Energy prices of all kinds have skyrocketed. Energy reliability is under threat.

Pollution is getting worse for the first time in decades, and Mr. Secretary it's all the Trump Administration's fault. The list of disastrous policy failures from this administration is long, but one of the worst offenses has been Trump's reckless war in Iran since day one. There's been no plan. In fact, the strategy changes by the day and by each Derrick social media post from the President first Trump says he wants to open the trades of her moves, and the next day, he say he wants to blockade it, and his erratic policies has sent global oil prices skyrocketing, and American drivers are now paying more than \$4 per gallon each time they fill up their tanks, while diesel prices have reached over \$5 per gallon, and Trump's work was The largest monthly increase in gas prices in nearly 60 years, and there's no relief in sight.

The average household is expected to spend \$740 extra on gas this year, making matters worse, the Trump Administration's initial response was to unleash sanction Russian and Iranian crude upon the world, rewarding two of the worst actors on the international stage, including the one the administration is actively fighting a war against. Even in the last week, the President has floated a plan that would allow Iran to collect billions of dollars in tolls for traversing the Straits of Hormuz. And the President Trump started this war promising that the Iranian regime would fall. But clearly that's not happening.

This war is an unequivocal disaster brought on by this President and throughout all this chaos and volatility in the market. Secretary Wright, your social media account was saying that the US was escorting ships through the Strait of Hormuz, and then the White House said it wasn't true. I don't know. It just doesn't seem like anybody can get their act together.



And you seem more interested in increasing the output of Venezuelan oil producers than addressing energy security challenges here in the US and the Trump Administration's energy policy has firmly put America last. So much for the promise of America first, it's America last. And it hasn't just been foreign policy Republicans disastrous domestic energy policies have put America last two electricity prices have increased at twice the pace of inflation. Natural gas prices are up 12% since the President took office.

Last month, energy prices caused inflation to reach its highest level in two years, and tens of millions of Americans are already struggling to afford their power bills. And last year, utilities requested \$31 billion in rate hikes, and rather than trying to soften the blow for Americans, the Department of Energy, under your leadership, has only made things worse. DOE has attacked energy efficiency standards, canceled or delayed clean energy projects slowed down important cost saving programs like the home rebates program and the weatherization assistance program just 36 hours ago, my staff received a 40 page list of grants that DOE has decided to retain or modify after leaving these grantees hanging for over 15 months. And these are projects that would strengthen the grid, build out clean energy, manufacturing, reduce our reliance on foreign Supply.

Chains, but many have not heard a word from the department for over a year, and this period of limbo has seriously jeopardized the viability of many of these projects. I mean, look, the bottom line is, you can't rob a bank then give 9% of the money back and expect a thank you. There isn't going to be any. Thank you for me.

Making matters worse, your administration has directly increased electricity prices by hundreds of millions of dollars in certain regions of the country to keep coal plants online. Unfortunately, as report last week showed, three of those plants you demand to stay online didn't produce a single megawatt of power, and yet, American families in those areas are seeing their electricity shoot through the roof. It's a perfect summary of the Trump Administration. Administration's policies with high cost and zero benefits.

So Secretary during your time at the Department of Energy, there has been a drastic and unprecedented decline in energy security and affordability for all Americans, and today's hearing is about ensuring that you're held accountable for what's happening on your watch and not continuing the steep price increases that American families face every day. And so with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Witness

The Honorable Chris Wright, Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy

Testimony

Q&A

Chairman Bob Latta (R-OH) discussed the global energy impacts the war on Iran has had and asked what DOE is doing to mitigate impacts at home and how he sees this playing out in the coming months. Sec. Wright said they have taken a number of actions in the short-term including the coordination globally the release of 400 million barrels of oil from strategic reserves, and



noted that the Biden administration depleted nearly half our reserves for economic reasons in 2022 without the disruption in flow like we are experiencing now. He continued that they have changed regulations for gasoline blending this summer to increase the production of gasoline and have done more work with our refiners and natural gas producers to accelerate production. Sec. Wright highlighted that he although he does not like the rise in prices, gasoline prices today are a gallon a dollar cheaper 4 years ago during a Biden administration that was not working to secure global safety. Chair Latta noted that California is experiencing the highest gas prices in the United States, while having limited its oil production, limited pipelines, relies on the Strait of Hormuz for 30% of their oil, and has closed several refineries over the past few years. Chair Latta asked what this means for consumers in California and across the Western United States. Sec. Wright said it is ruinous for California, stating that they import 50% of their oil despite the United States being a net exporter of oil, and about \$2 of the price for gas is due to state policies. Chair Latta asked him to explain the status of their portfolio review process. Sec. Wright said it was heartbreaking that roughly \$100 billion rushed out the door after the Biden administration lost the election and conducted a rigorous process to determine which projects aligned with the mission to deliver affordable, reliable energy.

Ranking Member Kathy Castor (D-FL) spoke about the cancellations of numerous clean energy projects which result in the Department being sued and lost. She continued that many of the projects cancelled were due to them being in blue states. Ranking Member Castor asked if it is fair to make a political decision to kill clean energy projects and raise energy bills. Sec. Wright said that statement is false and that all the 2240 decisions they made did not deserve politics. Ranking Member provide the example in which the Departments own lawyers signed a statement in which they admitted that the state the project resided was a primary reason. Sec. Wright said the states were included in the announcements but not in the decision and asked for her to be accurate when making accusations. In response, Ranking Member Castor refuted his previous claim that gas prices were higher during the Biden administration, and claims that they were not. Ranking Member Castor asked if he has released the funds for the 7 energy projects that prevailed. Sec. Wright said they will appeal against the decision once it is finalized. Ranking Member asked about all the grants to stabilize the grid, help lower costs, and bring on new clean energy if he intends to restore their funding after a court found their actions to be illegal. Sec. Wright said they will always follow the law, but what they call clean energy is the subsidies on wind, solar, and batteries that drove the 30% rise in electricity prices during the Biden administration and drove the rise in prices last year. Ranking Member spoke about the climate cost to funneling money to burning more fossil fuels and asked how the private sector can ever trust him when he arbitrarily cancels projects. Sec. Wright said they weren't arbitrarily and that climate insurance has declined in Florida.

Full Committee Chairman Brett Guthrie (R-KY) provided time to answer the previous question. Sec. Wright said he has never been accused of hiding his head in the sand before, and that he is very open about what they are doing. He continued that the plant has warmed and we have put 50% more plant food in the atmosphere, but damages from extreme weather have been on downward trend and that there has not been an increase in hurricanes, floods, droughts, and tornados. Chairman Guthrie noted that the claim



Full Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone (D-NJ) began by raising concerns about a tweet from the Department of Energy stating that the US Navy had successfully escorted an oil tanker through the Strait of Hormuz, which he said caused oil prices to drop below \$80 a barrel before rebounding once the post was deleted. Ranking Member Pallone asked whether Sec. Wright had personally posted the tweet and whether an internal investigation had been conducted to ensure DOE staff did not trade on the information. Sec. Wright responded that he did not post the tweet himself but took full responsibility for it, explaining that his communications staff had misinterpreted remarks he made during a speech in Colorado. He acknowledged it was an honest mistake but said he was not aware of any investigation into possible trading activity. Second, Ranking Member Pallone questioned the independence of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, citing reported comments by DOE staffer Seth Cohen that "the NRC is going to do whatever we tell the NRC to do." The Ranking Member noted that Cohen had since been promoted to chief counsel for nuclear policy and asked whether Sec. Wright believed the NRC's independence was important and why Cohen remained in his position. Sec. Wright affirmed that the NRC's independence was critically important and that close collaboration between the agencies also mattered. He described Cohen as a passionate advocate for nuclear power who had gotten over his skis and should not have made the statement, but said Cohen agreed the NRC should be independent. Ranking Member Pallone expressed skepticism about that characterization before yielding back his time.

Rep. Gary Palmer (R-AL) opened by citing gasoline price increases under the Biden administration, stating prices rose from \$2.39 per gallon to over \$5 per gallon. He then criticized colleagues for opposing policies he said would benefit Americans, including provisions eliminating taxes on Social Security benefits and tips, as well as a \$50 billion Rural Health Transformation Fund aimed at rural healthcare and maternity care. Turning to nuclear energy, Rep. Palmer asked Sec. Wright whether China could compete in artificial intelligence using only renewable power, given its plans to build approximately 100 nuclear reactors by 2035. Sec. Wright said it could not. Rep. Palmer then raised small modular reactors, noting that China's first SMR is already operating, and asked whether the United States is positioned to compete given the current structure of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Sec. Wright said the country is rapidly moving in that direction, expressed pride in the current NRC commissioners, and predicted multiple reactors would reach critical status in the coming months. He also pushed back on an earlier characterization from Ranking Member Pallone that the administration was not making progress on nuclear energy. Rep. Palmer and Sec. Wright then discussed using SMRs to expand baseload power for AI and manufacturing without raising rates on consumers, with Sec. Wright referencing a ratepayer protection pledge made with hyperscalers under President Trump's leadership. On permitting reform, Sec. Wright said agency-level NEPA reform has occurred and cited a unanimous Supreme Court decision on a parallel issue, but said Congress has not yet moved broader permitting reform, warning that without it China would continue to outpace the United States in electricity production. Sec. Wright also stated that expediting permitting would not undermine environmental laws. Rep. Palmer closed by expressing confusion about opposition to permitting reform, arguing it is essential to national and economic security and to reducing reliance on China for critical minerals, and Wright agreed with his points.



Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA) discussed the funding levels for the D3D facility in which the budget proposal requests for the lowest funding level in 13 years and to lay off 30% of its workforce and cease infrastructure work. Rep. Peters asked for him to work to keep that facility open. Sec. Wright said he would work with him to keep that facility open and would like to see our work in developing fusion grow. Rep. Peters discussed the current state of play for permitting reform including the SPEED act which he believes has a lot of good things. He continued by speaking about transmission being very important to help three-mile island and other energies get connected. Rep. Peters asked if he believes he will be able to work with them to get a Congressional deal this year. Sec. Wright said he believes so, and that there is room for a bipartisan agreement that can touch on all the issues he raised. Rep. Peters asked if parody between permitting pipelines and permitting transmission lines, something he would consider. Sec. Wright said yes. Rep. Peters said if himself and President Trump can come out and indicate that transmission has to be apart of it, then he believes they will be able to come out and get to a deal. Sec. Wright said he looks forward to those dialogues.

Rep. August Pfluger (R-TX) thanked Sec. Wright for his work in nuclear and highlighted the project with Abeline Christian University. Rep. Pfluger asked for his thoughts on that project. Sec. Wright said that reactor project is a perfect example of why we are going to have a nuclear renaissance this time. He gave credit to federal leadership, the leadership at the NRC, regulation change at DOE, and the money given to them to spur new uranium enrichment and fabrication. He continued that we have great private investment from universities and businesses, taking their own risks. Rep. Pfluger spoke about the crisis California and Northern New England will face by not allowing pipelines and the refineries shutting down due to harsh state policies. Rep. Pfluger asked to provide some ideas Congress could use to help prevent disasters in those coastal areas. Sec. Wright said there is a serious concern about national security in California, but yet them and other green energy states have the most expensive energy and a declining output. He continued that over 100 years ago California produced over 40% of the United States oil, today they only produce about 2%, while consuming about 10% which makes them dependent on importing oils from outside countries.

Rep. Rob Menendez (D-NJ) began by pressing Sec. Wright on the administration's energy record and its conflict with Iran. He asked what grade Sec. Wright would give himself for delivering on affordable, reliable, and secure energy. Sec. Wright declined to assign a grade but said the team had made significant progress over the past fifteen months. Rep. Menendez then asserted that gasoline prices had risen about a dollar per gallon since January, diesel was over \$5 per gallon, electricity prices had risen as much as 13 percent nationwide, and inflation had tripled the prior month due to a gas price spike, and said he would give the administration an F. He then questioned Sec. Wright about sanctions waivers granted to Russia and Iran. Sec. Wright confirmed waivers had been issued, explaining they were intended to route oil to Asian refineries rather than into Chinese strategic reserves. Rep. Menendez established that the Strait of Hormuz had been open before the conflict with Iran, though Sec. Wright noted it had always faced the threat of closure, and stated that Iran now had operational control of the strait, through which roughly 20 percent of global oil and about 130 ships typically pass each day. Rep. Menendez said the average gas price had risen from between \$2.87 and \$2.94 before the conflict to \$4.13, amounting to more than \$20.5 billion in additional costs to American consumers, while Sec.



Wright countered that current prices remained below the peak reached during the Biden administration. Asked whether the war was a failure from an energy perspective, Sec. Wright adamantly disagreed, stating that Iran had been a threat to global energy supplies for 47 years and that the administration intended to end that threat. On nuclear materials, Sec. Wright said he did not know the exact current status of Iran's enriched uranium and would not share what he did know. He agreed with Rep. Menendez's assessment that Iran was believed to hold about 960 pounds of uranium enriched to 60 percent, enough for roughly 10 warheads, and said that material had been produced before the U.S. strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, which he maintained was consistent with the president's claim that the program had been obliterated. On Venezuela and Cuba, Sec. Wright confirmed that the administration had threatened tariffs on countries supplying fuel to Cuba while allowing a Russian oil tanker to reach the island. Asked why the administration was weak on Russia, Sec. Wright rejected that characterization and said the administration had made extensive efforts to bring the war in Ukraine to an end. Rep. Menendez closed by saying Americans were struggling because of the war and the administration's policies

Rep. Rick Allen (R-GA) thanked Secretary Wright for his work and highlighted Plant Vogtle in his Georgia district, which he described as the nation's largest and most advanced clean nuclear energy facility, with Units 3 and 4 fully operational. Rep. Allen asked how the refocused Office of Energy Dominance Financing (EDF) could be used to expand existing nuclear plants, gas generation, grid components, and next-generation reactors. Sec. Wright said two of the earliest EDF loans were supporting nuclear plant restarts at the Palisades plant in Michigan and the former Three Mile Island site, which will be renamed the Crane Clean Energy Center. He explained that the Department of Energy is serving as a debt partner alongside corporate partners providing equity, and predicted that EDF loans would likely support the first five to ten new reactors built in the country before commercial capital markets take over that role. Rep. Allen then noted that EDF had recently approved what he described as the largest loan in Department of Energy history, \$26.5 billion to Southern Company and partnering utilities, to build new generating units and upgrade existing infrastructure, including six gigawatts of nuclear power improvements through uprates and license renewals. He asked what impact this would have on his constituents. Sec. Wright said the investment would halt electricity price increases he attributed to Biden administration policies, significantly expand deliverable electricity in Georgia and Alabama, and support new businesses, manufacturing, and data centers, leading to lower prices and higher wages. Rep. Allen concluded by referencing his Home Appliance Protection and Affordability Act, which passed the House in February and amends the Energy Policy and Conservation Act, and asked how the Department of Energy would ensure consumer choice and appliance affordability if the bill became law. Sec. Wright said it was critical to let Americans purchase the appliances they can afford and want to buy, and criticized the prior administration's approach, stating that none of the loans issued under it had mentioned affordability or cost in their applications.

Rep. Kevin Mullin (D-CA) spoke about the war in Iran causing gas prices to soar to a national average of above \$4 a gallon. He asked if before the war in Iran did DOE model what could happen to gas prices. Sec. Wright said DOE has engaged in the Iran questions since the administration started. Rep. Mullin asked if President Trump consult with him directly about the



effect his war would have at the pump. Sec. Wright said he did. Rep. Mullin asked if he has an estimate about how long the war will raise gas prices. Sec. Wright said in the long-term gas prices will be meaningfully lower, as they are removing the greatest threat to global energy security. Rep. Mullin spoke about his district, comprising of the San Deigo area being a global leader in innovation and research, and have leaned on ARPA-E for that mission. He continued that instead of using ARPA-E their budget proposal suggests cutting its funding by 43%, coming at a time when China is spending upwards of a trillion dollars on R&D. Rep. Mullin asked why they are proposing such steep cuts to their engine of commercialization. Sec. Wright said their request this year was flat from their request from last year and noted that they worked together to plus up their request last year and hope for a similar pathway this year.

Rep. Troy Balderson (R-OH) discussed the historic \$33 billion public-private partnership from DOE and DOC, as part of the partnership Softbank energy will build out 10 gigawatts of new energy, including a 9.2-gigawatt natural gas plant to power new data center investments in Ohio. Rep. Balderson asked him to discuss the department's role in crafting this partnership and more broadly how the administration is working to win the AI race while protecting the ratepayers. Sec. Wright said AI and reshoring manufacturing are going to have huge demands for electricity, and they need to go to places that have skilled workforce, reasonable business environment and energy resources. He said they reached out to developers of data centers and said if you can bring capital and compute to help advance their genesis mission then we want to help you, and that is where they identified the former gaseous diffusion plant in Portsmouth, Ohio. He continued that the many funding for the power generation is coming from the trade deal President Trump negotiated with Japan. Rep. Balderson asked how the department views the Utica and Marcelous Shale SNS set in supporting their goal of energy dominance. Sec. Wright said the Shale revolution transformed our country by resetting oil prices and natural gas prices. He continued how much gas that can be produced is limited by how much pipeline capacity there is. He added that the idea to use more gas without needing to build a long distance pipeline is to use it locally, for data centers and new factories.

Rep. Jennifer McClellan (D-VA) expressed concern that the administration had not advanced a coherent energy strategy to meet rising demand driven by digitalization and artificial intelligence. She criticized the administration for emphasizing fossil fuels over renewables and said the conflict with Iran had pushed gasoline prices above \$4 per gallon and diesel above \$5 per gallon, while 80 million Americans were struggling to pay utility bills. She also objected to budget provisions that she said would repeal \$15.2 billion in support for clean and renewable energy, direct nearly \$2 billion toward upgrading oil and natural gas infrastructure and extending the life of gas plants, and cut funding for offices focused on energy innovation. Rep. McClellan asked Sec. Wright whether the federal government should help rural localities and small grid operators protect their infrastructure from cyberattacks. Sec. Wright said yes, adding that the administration had shifted policies to address prior price increases and that cybersecurity on the electricity grid remained a major priority. Rep. McClellan then noted that the budget zeroes out the Rural and Municipal Utility Cybersecurity Program, which she said the committee had recently supported unanimously, and argued that eliminating it was counterproductive for under-resourced rural communities like those she represents in Virginia. She next asked whether efforts to mitigate the impact of data centers on regional and local grids would also help address energy



shortages and provide greater price stability. Sec. Wright agreed. Rep. McClellan said her district includes both the global data center capital and the clean energy capital of the South, and stated that the administration's cancellation of previously awarded grants under the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act had jeopardized more than \$233 million in grants in Virginia covering energy efficiency and grid reliability, including one studying how grid-enhancing technologies could reduce the impact of data centers. She said these cancellations made it harder for Virginia to balance data center growth with price, demand, and community impacts.

Rep. Diana Harshbarger (R-TN) thanked Sec. Wright for the department's work on building domestic uranium enrichment capacity through the National Nuclear Security Administration's defense fuels programs, noting that a site in her district has been selected to demonstrate centrifuge technology in support of highly enriched uranium production for the naval reactors program at NFS. She asked for an update on the program and its importance to national security. Sec. Wright said the United States has not enriched meaningful quantities of uranium for commercial or defense use in several decades and called that unacceptable. He said congressional funds appropriated roughly three years ago had gone unused through the final years of the Biden administration, and that the department had since run a competitive process covering multiple technologies, companies, and output targets. Awards have now been made, final terms are being negotiated, and he said the department wants construction to begin as quickly as possible. He added that regions like Tennessee, with an established workforce, regulatory environment, and nuclear history dating back to the Manhattan Project, are well positioned for this work. Rep. Harshbarger then asked about the recent trade deal with Japan, under which GE Vernova and Hitachi announced plans to invest \$40 billion in Tennessee and Alabama to build small modular reactors generating three gigawatts of power, and how the department would ensure rapid and affordable deployment. Sec. Wright said the department is in close contact with GE and Hitachi on the state of the technology, ordering long-lead-time parts, and accelerating permitting and construction, and said the Japanese trade deal provided critical funding to move the projects forward faster. Rep. Harshbarger noted that the Tennessee Valley Authority's partnership with Google for data centers would not result in increased ratepayer costs. She then asked about the potential for artificial intelligence to accelerate grid and transmission capacity, given that the department had budgeted over \$1 billion for AI and quantum. Sec. Wright said AI is critical for grid operations, citing the example of Three Mile Island being brought back online where the local grid authority estimated five or six years before connection. He said AI could automate complex grid studies and reduce the time required by a substantial factor, providing faster answers on optimizing the grid and building new resources. Rep. Harshbarger closed by raising concerns about electromagnetic pulse threats and the modernization and hardening of the electric grid with E1 and AFS protection devices and indicated she would follow up with additional questions.

Rep. Diana DeGette (D-CO) discussed what the administration has done to Colorado, she highlighted the termination of 223 projects. She continued that the Colorado Sun reported that \$550 million in Colorado clean energy grants, and yesterday they received a list of grants set to be retained or modified some of which are in Colorado. Rep. DeGette noted that they contacted the Colorado energy office asking if they had heard about this and they said they had not. She



asked if it is true that some of those grants to Colorado that were cut have now been reinstated. Sec. Wright said he thinks that is true. Rep. DeGette asked for a list of those projects to be shared with her office. Sec. Wright said his team would do that. Rep. DeGette asked if he was aware that one of the projects that were affected was to be the Colorado energy office for resilient and efficient codes implementation to adopt building codes that reduce pollution in which DOE projected would save American's \$168 million through 2040. Sec. Wright said Colorado has been leaning in on this and that if you build buildings differently, they can consume less energy. Rep. DeGette asked if that is one of the grants being reinstated. Sec. Wright said he did not know. Rep. DeGette asked if he agreed that it is a good thing to have better efficiency and save money. Sec. Wright said it is a tradeoff, if you make houses too expensive to buy them, then it is not always a good idea. Rep. DeGette asked if he is now regulating the cost of housing. Sec. Wright said he is not, but he is worried about the cost of everything. Rep. DeGette asked if the grants providing \$25 million in weatherization assistance, which helped lower income households reduce heating bills has been reinstated. Sec. Wright said he would have to look into it, and noted that some of the low-income grants contained crazy things like the social cost of carbon, and politics and nonsense. Rep. DeGette asked if he would agree that it is good to help lower income with heating bills, as heating bills cost. Sec. Wright said energy affordability has been a lifelong passion of his and said he has been frustrated by Democratic policies driving up energy costs. Rep. DeGette agreed that they are aligned in theory but questioned how it will work in practice. Rep. DeGette asked if he was aware that forcing the Camanche plant to remain operational for one year will cost between \$85-150 million. Sec. Wright said the cost of grid instability and blackouts would be much larger. Rep. DeGette asked if he is aware that cost comes with the additions of \$200 million-dollar solar project that now cannot come online due to limited transmission from the coal plant.

Rep. Cliff Bentz (R-OR) discussed the need for a new administrator for Bonnaville power, who can assist in taking advantage of the enormous asset the BPA is. Rep. Bentz asked for him to share his thoughts on Bonnaville power. Sec. Wright said is a very important power utility in the Northwest and it needs as strong of a leader as it can get, and stated that due to government salary limitations it has made it harder to recruit existing utility executives. Rep. Bentz noted that he introduced a bill a couple weeks ago to help adjust that salary as needed to ensure they get the right person for the job. Rep. Bentz spoke about the challenge the west faces with wildfires, with a part of the problem being the sheer amount of wood in these areas. He continued that a new development is the ability to transition part of this biomass into cellulose fuel, who's development cost is being driven down. Rep. Bentz asked if DOE is working with AG to work together to help generate more fuel while also assisting in fire suppression. Sec. Wright said he is not aware of existing efforts, but he is very aware of that problem. He said we stopped the ability to thin or control the forest otherwise and said we have to either let fires burn or manage the forest and we do neither right now. He said he would check in with his team and the AG department.

Rep. Jake Auchincloss (D-MA) expressed agreement with Rep. Peters on energy permitting reform, calling it a potential bipartisan win and emphasizing the importance of energy sovereignty for economic and national security. He said building projects in the United States should not take ten to fifteen years amid repeated litigation and regulatory delays, and



encouraged Sec. Wright to help spark renewed progress on permitting legislation. Rep. Auchincloss then turned to the department's Office of Energy Dominance Financing, which he described as a powerful tool for commercializing nuclear and geothermal technologies. He said Massachusetts should overturn its moratorium on nuclear power, noting that the state's current swing oil supply comes from Yemen by way of Trinidad and Tobago, and argued this does not constitute energy sovereignty. He also advocated for offshore wind development, citing the recent cold winter, the grid's shift toward a winter peak, and the wind's seasonal strength as factors that could reduce utility bills for his constituents. He criticized what he described as arbitrary and capricious attacks on offshore wind by the administration and warned that overturning permits after long-term capital has been committed sets a troubling precedent that could eventually be applied to other energy sources. Sec. Wright agreed there is room for bipartisan compromise on making it easier to build in America and said now was the window to act. Rep. Auchincloss then asked about administrative funding for the Office of Energy Dominance Financing, noting the office has roughly \$200 billion in loan authority, more than \$100 billion in obligations, and that administrative expenses had been about \$120 million annually under the previous administration. He urged sufficient funding to retain technically competent, apolitical staff. Sec. Wright said the office is being run more like a professional bank than a bureaucratic agency and said he believes a strong team is currently in place, adding that the office would be important for launching nuclear and next-generation geothermal projects. Rep. Auchincloss raised a final question about a rule preventing certain EDF programs from lending to projects expected to receive any form of federal support, suggesting the threshold should apply only to full federal support. Sec. Wright said he was open to dialogue on the issue and noted he was not in the department when the rule was created.

Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks (R-IA) began by asking Sec. Wright whether the 2021 cancellation of the Keystone pipeline could be considered a disruption of the rule of law, referencing a point raised by a colleague across the aisle. Sec. Wright agreed and said attacks on energy production and large construction projects in the United States have predominantly come from the political left. Rep. Miller-Meeks then asked about the role of biofuels in the administration's domestic energy agenda, particularly given her state of Iowa's agricultural base and current global supply concerns tied to the Middle East. Sec. Wright said the United States produces roughly 40 percent of the world's biofuels, that U.S. gasoline infrastructure now depends on ethanol making up at least 10 percent of liquid fuel content, and that domestic refining capacity is insufficient to meet gasoline demand without it. He said future growth would depend on technology and cost competitiveness but affirmed that biofuels are a major part of American energy. Rep. Miller-Meeks then raised concerns about alternative fuels and feedstocks now housed under the Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation, noting that the account had been reduced by approximately 98 percent from \$400 million to \$10 million, and questioned how such a reduction aligns with the administration's energy dominance and security goals given geopolitical exposure in jet fuel markets. Sec. Wright described the reduction as part of scarce resource allocation, called it an opening proposal from the administration, and said he was open to dialogue about adjusting focus areas. Rep. Miller-Meeks thanked Sec. Wright for a recent visit to Ames National Laboratory and asked about ARPA-E funding levels and their role in translating basic research into startups and new energy generation. Sec. Wright said he has spent his career in energy innovation and investment, described ARPA-E's track record as strong, and



noted that the administration's request matches last year's funding level after Congress had increased it. He said some prior funding under the previous administration had gone to projects unrelated to affordable, reliable, and secure energy, but that the program has been refocused, and he strongly supports it. Rep. Miller-Meeks mentioned having enjoyed Sec. Wright's remarks at CERAWEEK in Houston and yielded back.

Rep. Doris Matsui (D-CA) discussed the impacts the war in Iran is having on gas prices, fertilizer, and called back to comments to President Trump saying he does not care about prices, if they rise, they rise. Rep. Matsui asked if he stands by those words. Sec. Wright said he serves in this administration to drive down prices, when they arrived they had an energy emergency and are currently working to solve a 47 year problem that threatens the global energy markets. Rep. Matsui asked if he disagreed with the President's assessment that the cost of gas will remain this high until at least November. Sec. Wright said he does not think himself or the President know what the future price of energy are, but said he is proud of the massive conflict is being resolved. Rep. Matsui stated the budget plans to take \$15 billion from critical infrastructure to prop up old coal plants and new fossil fuel power plants. Rep. Matsui asked where the money for these plants will come from. Sec. Wright said there is funding from previous allocations for work on coal plants, he added that during winter storm fern, coal was the 2nd largest power source. Rep. Matsui asked what authority he is using to repurpose this funding. Sec. Wright said they have funding for coal, and carbon capture which is the modernization of a coal plant. Rep. Matsui stated that he has been public about his stance against energy subsidies, especially as it pertains to wind. Rep. Matsui asked if it is not a subsidy to give the coal industry billions of dollars. Sec. Wright said they aren't getting billions, but there is a few hundred million dollars going to coal for short term modernization and does not want to subsidize coal long term. Rep. Matsui asked why he cancelled one of the largest advanced conductor projects and other advanced transmission projects. Sec. Wright said they look at the projects to determine if it will benefit the American taxpayer.

Vice Chairman Randy Weber (R-TX) spoke about the oil released from the strategic reserve which 60% of sits in his district. Rep. Weber asked how much oil has been sold so far and how much more we expect to sell. Sec. Wright said in their original round they sold 42 million barrels, and in another round, they sold 26 million barrels in total around 70 million of the 172 million units pulled from the reserves. Sec. Wright then corrected himself, stating they are trading the barrels, and all of these deals are structured as swaps so they will get back 1.2 barrel for every 1 they released. Rep. Weber asked what authority the DOE has to authorize that oil to be replaced. Sec. Wright said they are the managers of SBR and are members of the international energy agency. Rep. Weber asked to explain why the US natural gas prices have been largely unaffected by the conflicts in the middle east. Sec. Wright said we have immense reserves of natural gas and have immense produce capacity, which helps domestics consumer be largely insulated from rise in price. Rep. Weber noted Golden Pass LNG achieved their first production of LNG which represents a major step forward of American energy independence and asked how we can ensure economic opportunities boost LNG exports. Sec. Wright said it is the fastest growing export and predicts it will be the largest US export. Rep. Weber asked how we can maintain the integrity of the Jones Act. Sec. Wright said the wavier is only entitled to energy products.



Rep. Paul Tonko (D-NY) raised concerns about Department of Energy priorities while focusing on three specific areas. He first addressed the Weatherization Assistance Program, noting that participating low-income households save an average of \$372 annually on utility bills. Rep. Tonko said the annual program notices needed for states to apply for previously appropriated fiscal year 2026 funds had not yet been released and that delays could disrupt state programs. He asked Sec. Wright to commit to looking into the status of the guidance and publishing it as soon as possible. Sec. Wright agreed, saying the department had worked on the program this year and last, removing restrictions tied to what he described as a social cost of carbon and decarbonization framework, and said the guidance should be ready this year. Rep. Tonko next turned to the ENERGY STAR program, which helps consumers identify energy-efficient appliances. He noted that a new memorandum of agreement between DOE and EPA shifts primary responsibility for the program to DOE, that EPA's budget justification indicates support for the program will move to DOE in fiscal year 2027 with one FTE allocated, and that the program has historically required about \$35 million annually. He asked whether DOE was seeking that funding in its budget request. Sec. Wright said he supported voluntary appliance ratings and data transparency but would need to follow up on the specific funding details. Tonko pressed for information on where the \$35 million would appear in the DOE budget and asked whether the department was putting people and resources in place for a smooth transition. Sec. Wright said he would need to get back to him on both the funding and transition plans. Finally, Rep. Tonko raised concerns about forecasting electricity demand amid rapid growth driven by large load facilities such as data centers, and asked whether DOE could do more to help grid operators, states, and utilities harmonize forecasting methods. Sec. Wright said grid stability and capacity expansion are a major focus of the administration. Rep. Tonko expressed concern that a 21 percent cut to the Office of Electricity budget could undermine that work and yielded back.

Rep. Gabe Evans (R-CO) opened with state-level statistics, noting that Colorado produced less electricity in 2025 than in 2024 and citing a study commissioned by the Colorado Energy Office estimating that the state's energy policies would cost about \$61 billion, with those costs passed on to ratepayers. He said the state has experienced multiple public safety power shutoffs and that the city of Boulder has told businesses to purchase gas generators. Referencing Sec. Wright's recent visit to the state's largest natural gas generating station in his district, Rep. Evans asked Sec. Wright to discuss the importance of affordable, reliable baseload power to both national security and the economy. Sec. Wright said the American electricity grid runs on natural gas, coal, nuclear, and in some regions hydro, and argued that increasing the share of intermittent resources raises prices and reduces reliability while subsidies undermine the economics of reliable generation. He criticized policies in Colorado and California and said he could not understand why they were still being defended. Rep. Evans then asked about Department of Energy investments in commercial-scale fusion energy, referencing a tour of Xcimer. Sec. Wright said he was excited by progress in fusion, explaining that the department supports basic science at national laboratories, including work on materials capable of withstanding high-energy neutrons, and partners with commercial businesses through milestone-based funding agreements. He praised Xcimer's technology and said he expected fusion to become a physical reality in the next few years. Rep. Evans next asked about the Energy Threat Analysis Center (ETAC) housed at the National Lab of the Rockies and efforts to protect grid infrastructure through public-



private partnerships. Sec. Wright described ETAC as critical, explaining that it brings commercial utility personnel into a shared facility to observe threats on a broader scale, deploy lab technology to improve grid security, and accelerate grid studies to speed interconnections. In his final seconds, Rep. Evans asked for Sec. Wright's remaining thoughts on the Jones Act. Sec. Wright said it is a necessary tool to limit energy price spikes during flow disruptions, noted that energy prices had remained relatively flat over the preceding weeks under the current administration, and predicted the ongoing supply interruptions would be resolved in the coming weeks.

Rep. Marc Veasey (D-TX) said the budget did not lower costs for Americans, citing surging gas and electricity prices and growing global instability over the war in Iran. He spoke about the Permian Basin as the backbone of American energy production, and the workforce shortage as a result of the administration's mass deportations that the Basin needs to support American energy dominance. He gave an example of a worker in west Texas who was detained delaying project development at his job also hurting his family and asked Sec. Wright if these workers were essential as they were told when they needed their labor or if they were expendable. Sec. Wright spoke about his and the congressman's passion for the American labor force, especially in the energy sector, emphasizing the importance of legal immigration. Rep. Veasey asked if Sec. Wright had been given any directives to let oil and gas companies know that they were only targeting individuals that are the worst of the worst and have committed crimes. Sec. Wright said this was not his area of expertise. Rep. Veasey contended that Sec. Wright was aware that there were undocumented individuals working in the Basin. Sec. Wright acknowledged that it existed but said it was a rather small minority and the vast majority of immigrant workers were legal. Rep. Veasey noted that the undocumented workers tended to do the harder and more dangerous jobs. He asked Sec. Wright if he cared about all the employees that helped him live the life he did as an oil and gas CEO regardless of their immigration status. Sec. Wright said he did.

Rep. Craig Goldman (R-TX) discussed affordability and state gas taxes, and asked Sec. Wright if every state was equal. Sec. Wright said it was not; DOE had made maps about this issue that looked like political maps and gas and electricity were expensive in blue states due to political choices. Rep. Goldman clarified that California had the highest gas prices in the country due to it having the highest gas tax. Sec. Wright added that it was more than just the gas tax because there were additional regulations and overlays on the production of gas in California increasing prices higher than the national average. Rep. Goldman agreed it was a choice and that consumers would pay the price at the end of the day. He asked Sec. Wright to talk about if they were able to put natural gas in pipelines across the country and the cost of projects like the Keystone pipeline being approved and then not actually built. Sec. Wright said pipelines were a major part of energy affordability and would have a measurable impact on where data centers and factories would be located, but they had not built a pipeline that crosses state boundaries in almost eight years and due to Democratic power they may never build another. Sec. Wright emphasized the need to fix this due to New England had ridiculously high energy prices while next to an abundant source of LNG in Pennsylvania. Rep. Goldman added that it was misleading American people to believe that pipelines did not exist in the country when they did and they were all over. Sec. Wright said that was why America had the great industrial past it did. Rep. Goldman asked if there was a timeline as to when the first SMR in America would come online. Sec. Wright said



they would have critical SMRs running by the 4th of July but they would not be plugged into the grid and selling electrons for about three years.

Rep. Kim Schrier (D-WA) discussed her support for making energy more affordable and more abundant but since his last visit prices have increased, and the war in Iran continues to make life less affordable across sectors. She shifted to the Centralia coal plant, that had stopped coal production and was in the process of transitioning to natural gas before it paused. She asked if he was familiar with this plant. Sec. Wright said he is a little bit. Rep. Schrier asked if he is aware, it is still costing money from ratepayers as it produces zero energy. Sec. Wright said the right way to transition from coal to gas, is to build the gas capacity before you take coal off the market, doing the opposite is what drives blackouts and cost. Rep. Schrier said they are getting by on Hydropower for now, but it will be needed in 2028 when the plant was originally scheduled to come online. Rep. Schrier asked him to look at this and stop the pause order. Sec. Wright said they will look at it but if the plant was ordered to stay open it was for a grid reliability reason. Rep. Schrier said it should not be a blanket rule if that is the case. Sec. Wright said it is not a blanket rule and they will look at it again. Rep. Schrier highlighted the Hanford site, and noted that some of the tanks are leaking and the importance of monitoring ground water. She continued that the budget zeroed out ground water monitoring and asked him to look at that.

Rep. Russell Fry (R-SC) discussed the importance of the NRC licensing reform under the ADVANCE Act, and highlighted the plan the DOE has to develop nuclear lifecycle innovation campuses. Rep. Fry asked if DOE would engage with the committee or Congress generally to change the statutory language stating it can only be stored at Yucca Mountain to expand that. Sec. Wright said it is likely that there will be necessary engagement on the long term waste storage. He continued that he does not see Yucca Mountain as the future and that 28 states said they were interested in these campuses. Rep. Fry asked him to ensure that the NWF dollar will be used for disposal activities as they were intended. Sec. Wright said that is the intention and the government was suppose to have a repository long ago and they need to get on that. Rep. Fry asked to explain the efforts of the loan office to help reduce those supply chain costs. Sec. Wright said they work closely with the NRC, and noted that on this test reactor program they have a number of NRC employees detailed to DOE working alongside them. He continued that they are working on getting enrichment, and fabrication stood up in the country and our ability to build nuclear power plants has atrophied.

Rep. Lizzie Fletcher (D-TX) began by pushing back on Sec. Wright's earlier characterization of Strategic Petroleum Reserve releases, noting that oil is traded on a global market and that the 2022 releases during the Biden administration came amid supply disruptions following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the resulting sanctions. She mentioned a bill she had introduced during the first Trump administration proposing to fill the SPR when oil prices were at record lows during the early COVID pandemic. Rep. Fletcher then turned to concerns about industry trust in the federal government as a reliable partner, stating that she had disagreed with President Biden's revocation of the Keystone pipeline permit and disagreed with President Trump's revocation of wind permits. She argued the underlying issue transcends any single administration and that consistent rules are essential to attract the investment the country needs. Rep. Fletcher then focused on the conflict with Iran, citing the Dallas Federal Reserve Energy Survey, in which



industry executives warned that if the Strait of Hormuz did not reopen soon, oil could reach \$170 per barrel. She noted that President Trump had twice described Iran's retaliatory strikes against Gulf states and the closure of the Strait of Hormuz as a surprise, and said that Sec. Wright's exchange with Rep. DeLauro the previous day, in which he indicated he had anticipated the possibility, was more consistent with what former Secretary Clinton had described as a scenario included in every war plan. Rep. Fletcher asked whether Sec. Wright had been consulted about the possibilities and potential outcomes of action in Iran. Sec. Wright said he had been in dialogue with the president and the broader administration about the Iranian problem and potential solutions. Asked specifically about the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, Sec. Wright confirmed that topic had been discussed and said its closure was not a surprise to anyone, though he said President Trump had been surprised by Iran's strikes on countries such as Oman and Azerbaijan that had not previously been adversaries. Rep. Fletcher said she would submit additional questions for the record and yielded back.

Rep. Julie Fedorchak (R-ND) thanked Secretary Wright for his leadership and clarity on the connections between energy policy, cost, national security, and quality of life. She criticized what she described as claims from colleagues across the aisle that current price increases stem from the current administration's policies, arguing instead that the increases reflect a decade of policies pursued by the political left that she said have weakened the power grid. Rep. Fedorchak said the solutions are clear and being pursued, including halting the retirement of existing grid resources. She referenced recent testimony from Jim Robb of NERC, who she said had warned that the grid currently lacks sufficient power to meet demand, and noted she has introduced legislation reinforcing the principle that new resources should be connected and operational before existing ones are retired, as well as legislation supporting optimization of the current grid through investments in high-capacity technologies. Rep. Fedorchak then asked Sec. Wright to discuss efforts to expand energy production, particularly enhanced oil recovery in the Bakken formation in North Dakota, where production is on a declining curve and where investment is being made in carbon capture and enhanced oil recovery. Sec. Wright explained that while shale natural gas production can recover 40 to 70 percent of the resource from the rocks, primary production of oil from low-permeability shale formations recovers only about 10 percent, leaving roughly 90 percent in the ground. Drawing on his early career in California oil fields dating to the 1910s and 1920s, he said technology continues to evolve and that similar advances will occur in shale production. He said North Dakota and the Bakken will be a key testing area for methods to recover additional oil, including the injection of ethane, propane, and carbon dioxide, with researchers exploring whether injection into producing wells or offset wells will be most effective. Sec. Wright said the goal is to identify techniques that could add another five to ten percent of recovery, potentially doubling output from the Bakken, and described this as the kind of research and technology development that the United States and North Dakotans regularly pursue.

Rep. John James (R-MI) said what they had seen during Winter Storm Fern should be a wakeup call for Michigan in terms of the importance of grid reliability, emphasizing the reliability of coal, natural gas, and nuclear over wind and solar in an emergency. He criticized state actions taking reliable thermal generation off the grid in favor of wind and solar, while also shutting down critical pipeline infrastructure, warning that the next storm would bring



consequences if they did not change course. He asked Sec. Wright how do aggressive state net zero mandates accelerating the retirement of dispatchable generation align with his responsibility to ensure grid reliability in regions like Michigan that were already facing elevated risk. Sec. Wright said the mandates were directly contrary to that objective and were almost completely irrelevant in climate change and net zero efforts as well as the energy would just go elsewhere. Rep. James asked Sec. Wright to expound on the priorities of DOE financing programs to shift to firm support of dispatchable technology and domestic critical minerals supply chain. Sec. Wright said they wanted to support things that created job opportunities and lowered costs, such as the restart of two nuclear power plants, construction of new natural gas plants, extending the life of existing nuclear plants and more. Sec. Wright noted the main question as they evaluate loan opportunities was what the impact was going to be on increasing the supply of electricity and decreasing the costs.

Rep. John Joyce (R-PA) stated that Pennsylvania energy was allowing America to be energy dominant, applauding the work of Sec. Wright's 202 emergency orders during Winter Storm Fern. He emphasized that the grid survived the storm because of generation from coal, natural gas and oil as reliable dispatchable energy sources essential for grid stability. He expressed his excitement about the Northeast Supply Enhancement (NSE) pipeline for safe transmission of energy and discussed his advocacy for using Pennsylvanian LNG. Rep. Joyce asked Sec. Wright to talk about how the American energy dominance agenda aligned with national security goals. Sec. Wright said that Pennsylvania was the birthplace of American energy dominance and continued to be so, saying that if they had affordable reliable energy they could reshore industries that had been pushed overseas securing supply chains, reindustrialize the country, and lead in AI. Rep. Joyce asked Sec. Wright what further steps he felt should be taken, specifically regarding natural gas, to allow the abundant reserves to be utilized in the Northeast. Sec. Wright said the reserves, technology, and workers were there, but the current limit was pipelines, which would be improved by the NSE pipeline and further increased if the Constitution pipeline were to be built. Rep. Joyce said he looked forward to working to advance their shared energy goals.

Chairman Latta brought the hearing to a close.