



FROM: Kountoupes Denham Carr & Reid

DATE: Wednesday, April 22, 2026

RE: Senate Appropriations Energy and Water Development Subcommittee Hearing on a Review of the President's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request for the Department of Energy

Topline Summary

- The Senate Appropriations Energy and Water Development Subcommittee convened for a Review of the President's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request for the Department of Energy.
- Republicans emphasized boosting domestic production of oil, natural gas, nuclear as means of preventing grid instability and countering geopolitical threats. They focused their question on lowering costs through increasing energy supply, supporting data centers growth without raising consumer bills, and maintaining the modernization of nuclear and fossil fuel infrastructure.
- Democrats repeatedly pressed on rising gas and electricity prices, criticized cuts to efficiency and clean energy programs, and raised concerns about impacts on households, jobs, and innovation. They also questioned whether DOE decisions to cut or cancel projects were politically motivated or harmful to states.

Senators Attending: Chairman John Kennedy (R-LA), Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA), Sen. Katie Britt (R-AL), Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI) Sen. Bill Hagerty (R-TN), Sen. Chris Coons (D-DE), Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD), Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Sen. Lindsay Graham (R-SC), & Sen. John Hoeven (R-ND)

[Live Hearing Link](#)

Meeting called to order by Chairman Kennedy

Opening Statements

Chairman John Kennedy (R-LA): Mr. Secretary I think you've got a big brain too. I'm reading your book. I'm not finished. I give 10 pages here and five pages there, as best I can tell.

And this impresses me. You believe in all forms of energy, so long as those forms or are reasonably priced, accessible to the American people, and they work and I happen to agree with you, here's my plan for the budget, for what it works, for what it's worth. As you know, we have a \$30 trillion deficit. Every one of my colleagues up here is well aware of that, and we want to try to reduce I was very proud of what our work demonstrated.

Last time in the current budget, we were able to reduce spending and accommodate just about everybody's interest. Visa V the last budget, we were able to reduce spending adjusted for inflation, 2.7% that's going to be very hard this time, not impossible. And I want to aim for it. And I think everybody, all of my colleagues up here on both sides of the aisle, want to aim for it, but we're going to spend more



money on defense, and some of that money, not all of that money, is going to come out of non-defense spending.

My goal is to craft an energy in water budget that looks like somebody designed it on purpose. Everybody's opinion counts, and that includes, but is not limited to my Democratic colleagues. I want to try to work it out. It's going to require a little compromise on the part of all of us.

I want to get started. I talked to Senator Collins yesterday, and now I'm talking to the Vice Chair, who's here listening to me, I want to get started now. On a personal note, doesn't require your comment two things. I don't know when the price of gas going to come down, either, if I did, I'd go play that thing called the poly market.

Okay. I. Happen to believe that that the conflict with Iran was necessary. The people were dealing with, we're dealing with Charles Manson, and you can't give him a nuclear weapon, and that's why we had to go Cat Woman on Iran.

But I think we're pretty close to being done. I don't think the President is going to send in troops when, when the conflict ends, the price of gas will come down. I don't know how fast you I don't know why it is. Probably has something to do with the traders.

You folks should know that better than I do, but the price goes up quicker than it comes down. But the American people are not stupid. They get it. They understand when we have conflicts in the Middle East. Middle East affects the price of energy. Number two, or whatever the hell it is, I have great respect for Senator Schumer. I like Iris, his wife better, but I like Chuck. He is a shrewd negotiator. He did the right thing for America last March, when we were in the shutdown, and helped us get out of a shutdown. He got beaten bloody by a big portion of his is of his party. In fact, they cut him up so bad, all they have left to work on is scar tissue. I'm really worried that that that Chuck's going to shut down government again right before the mid terms.

I hope I'm wrong. I hope my colleagues will talk to him

and try to convince him that would be a bad thing to do, but I want to get ready for it. I don't want to stop our work on our budget. I want to go full speed ahead, but I deal with the world as it is, not as I want it to be.

None of that requires comment. Okay. In fact, my advice to you is to stay away with this business of how fast the price of gas going to come down. Okay.

I don't want to get off on that tangent. The safest thing to say soon, I'm going to save all my questions and let my colleagues talk. I'm going to turn to the esteemed Vice Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and turn it over to her.

Ranking Member Patty Murray (D-WA): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, welcome Mr. Secretary you're right. Last year, working together, we were able to write and pass a bipartisan funding bill that actually looked nothing like the budget President Trump requested. I didn't love it, but was a compromise. We worked well together, and we delivered investments to lower energy costs and advance American innovation.



We rejected some really extreme cuts, and we protected crucial investments that matter immensely to my state, like the Hanford clean up and Pacific Northwest National Lab Howard Hansen dam and I know, Ms. Chairman, you delivered for people back home in Louisiana as well. That is really how this process works best. We talk to folks back home, we talk to our colleagues, we talk to each other, and we negotiate a bill, the strongest bill we can for America. We did that last year, Mr. Chairman, and I'm honored to work with you, and look forward to doing that again this year.

But looking at this President's budget, Mr. Secretary I have to say it's pretty clear we have our work cut out for us, because we're going to have to start from scratch here. This budget really is a war, bloated disaster. We're talking one and a half trillion dollars on war, and that is an increase of half a trillion dollars, and this budget takes a hatchet to programs that lower our families, energy bills, research that keeps us ahead of China, crucial water projects that our communities rely on. And gas prices, prices are sky high, and energy bills are ticking up month after month so that Trump can help his the defense contractors make a killing, and I will tell you at home, that's not what our families want.

You know what they are worried about? They are worried about energy costs. But worse than failing on high energy costs, this administration is actually driving them higher, canceling energy projects that would bring down those costs, waging Trump's absurd trade wars and now starting this actual war in Iran and this budget doubles down on driving those costs up. The Weatherization Assistance Program really critical.

It helps our families afford energy efficient home improvements. Actually saves families \$372 a year. It directly brings down families costs. But instead of saving families, Trump's budget would save them nothing with this program.

He wants to zero it out entirely. Meanwhile, for well over a year now, this administration has been sitting on billions of dollars in funding that Democrats provided for energy rebates they. Is funding that should be going directly into families pockets to help them cover the cost of energy efficiency upgrades save some money. The department should be providing households up to \$14,000 and it should be helping families across the country save over \$1 billion each year on their energy bills.

It should be supporting over 50,000 jobs and installing heat pumps and solar panels and more. Instead, you are denying families this funding while they are paying 567, dollars a gallon at the pump, and let's talk about research and innovation, because I have to imagine this budget would make officials in Beijing smile Trump's \$17 billion dollar cut to science and energy here, all but forfeits the Clean Energy competition. It torpedoes our research and innovation and sabotages American manufacturing. Trump wants to cut the Office of Science by 15% he wants to hobble the Pacific Northwest National Lab in Washington State.

I visit there frequently, and I see firsthand how they are a leading edge on everything from AI battery technologies, material science, not to mention nuclear, Non-Proliferation, something else this budget actually takes a hatchet to. So for someone who brags all the time about his how his uncle was an MIT professor, Trump doesn't seem to get this maybe you got confused between cutting edge research and cutting research. I don't know, but I do know everyone here gets it, and we're not going to give up on America's scientific leadership. Trump wants to cut the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy by two thirds.

This budget proposes rescinding over \$15 billion dollars in funding that's already approved in the bipartisan infrastructure bill. We are talking about canceling major in fresh investments that will bring



more energy online. These are projects that lower costs for our families. These are investments that strengthen our energy independence.

They reduce our reliance on foreign oil Trump's budget tosses them in the trash. But I hope this committee does not do that, and it won't, if I have anything to say about it. Instead, we should toss this budget in the trash and start by working on an energy budget that works for all of us. Trump is also trying to short change Hanford.

Now this budget would slash the Hanford cleanup by \$400 million we are at a very crucial moment when we are preparing to build the high level waste facility, and Trump wants to cut the legs out from under us by ripping away hundreds of millions of dollars, and it will not save money if we skimp on that clean up right now, it will take longer and it will cost more, so I will again be fighting tooth and nail for Hanford like I do every year, because we have a moral and we have a legal obligation to get this right. Now, while Trump proposes slashing investments to lower costs, there is one item he wants to boost, and it is an eye popping amount our nuclear weapons program. Now, Trump has said, and I quote him, we have enough nuclear weapons to blow up the world 150 times. Apparently, that's not enough, because this budget would increase funding for our nuclear weapons program by over \$7 billion to build new facilities, and that is on top of nearly \$4 billion boost from the Republicans bill a year ago, because everyone knows that's what families are begging for, cutting Alzheimer's research and affordable housing so we can blow up the world 151 times.

We've got to be real facilities for a larger nuclear weapons arsenal will not help feed our starving kids. Exploding the budget for defense contractors will not help parents struggling with rent. This budget is a microcosm of the moral bankruptcy that runs through the entire budget, more money for war, more money for war, and less money for families, and this backwards budget would only compound the major problems we've seen at the department over the last year, because over the last year, DOE has seen massive staff reductions. Our national labs have lost thousands of staff.

Departmental policies threaten billions in research funding for our universities until Congress stepped in, and of course, the department is openly breaking the law and illegally blocking and canceling funding. I mentioned how you're blocking funding to help families save money, but we should acknowledge that nine months ago, after GAO affirmed you are impounding funds for school energy improvements, you still have not moved a single penny that is funding for our kids, and it's funding for our schools, and meanwhile, hugely important energy projects that we that were actually years in the making, that we're creating good jobs and we're saving families real money have been canceled for blatantly political reasons, and that includes the Pacific Northwest hydrogen hub in my home state of Washington. Your department acknowledged in Court, which ruled against you, by the way. Nine that when Russ Vought told DOE during the shutdown to cancel projects you did so considering, and I quote whether the grantee was located in a blue state, that is really outrageous and impossible to overstate the meltdown there be if the shoe were on the other foot and a Democratic president did that to red states, I hope my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will acknowledge what's happening here and work with us to fix it. Now. The good news is that while this budget is a mess, it's not exactly new. Trump tried a lot of this last year. So respectfully, Mr. Secretary I'm going to work to tear this budget up. I will work with my colleagues to write a budget that is responsible, and I look forward to working with you. Chair, Kennedy, to do that.

Witnesses

The Honorable Chris Wright, Secretary, Department of Energy



Testimony

Thank you. Chairman, Kennedy, Ranking Member Murray and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the President's Fiscal Year 2027, budget for the Department of Energy, under President Trump's leadership, we have put the department back on mission, delivering affordable, reliable and secure energy for the American people. Let me highlight what that looks like. We have taken decisive steps to restore grid stability, using emergency authorities under Section 202 C of the Federal Power Act, we kept critical base load generation online after DOE analysis warned outage risk, risks could increase up to 100 fold by 2030 due to supply shortfalls.

This action and the market response to our action preserved 17 gigawatts of critical dispatchable generation for the American people. Hundreds of American lives were saved by these actions during winter storm fern. Historic coal drove record heating and electricity demand, dispatchable energy, natural gas, coal, hydro and nuclear were the MVPs of the grid in New England at peak demand, hydrocarbons, hydro and nuclear provided 95% of power. Wind, solar and batteries combined provided 2% less than burning wood and trash.

The lesson when reliability is on the line, dispatchable energy shows up. We have worked to establish American energy leadership globally since President Trump ended the previous administration's reckless LNG export approval ban, the department has approved more than 19 billion cubic feet a day of new export authorizations, which is more than America's entire capacity on Inauguration Day last January, the United States is the global leader in LNG exports, and will become even more dominant under President Trump's leadership. This is a win for America, a win for our allies, a win for global security and a blow to our adversaries, we are advancing national security at home and abroad. From day one, President Trump has focused on delivering prosperity at home and peace abroad.

Occasionally, power must be projected to create long term peace. American national security is anchored by our nuclear deterrent. DOE, National Nuclear Security Administration is honored by this mission to ensure a safe, secure and effective deterrent against new and evolving threats today. NNSA is delivering more new weapons, seven warhead modernization programs and plutonium pits than at any time since the Cold War, we are driving a nuclear power Renaissance.

Our efforts span next generation reactor pilot programs, reestablishing America, American nuclear enrichment capacity and domestic nuclear fuel fabrication, reprocessing and pathway to spent fuel permanent management. I am proud to share that we will have multiple advanced reactor prototypes critical by America's 250th birthday. We are driving hard to meet President Trump's goal of quad drooping, quadrupling nuclear capacity to 400 gigawatts by 2050, this ensures nuclear energy will play a central role in powering America's reindustrialization and leadership in AI our budget request reaffirms our commitment to cleaning up nuclear waste in communities that carried the weight of America's earliest nuclear programs. We are bringing professional management and innovation to enhance clean up efforts, while seeking to redevelop cleaned up sites like Portsmouth, Paducah, Hanford and others, we launched the Genesis mission to bring AI's immense promise to scientific and technical innovation.

Our nation's history, there have been two great scientific mobilizations, the World War II, Manhattan Project and the Apollo space program. The Genesis mission is the third Genesis mission is focused on the most difficult scientific challenges of our time, quantum computing, fusion energy, advanced materials development and human health, we are partnering where industry alone cannot go, tackling long term challenges that require national commitment, bringing together our national laboratories, universities and private industry to accelerate scientific discovery. We are winning the AI race and lowering energy costs by leveraging department owned land and assets, we are enabling rapid deployment of large scale



compute capacity through public private partnerships. We are working closely with industry and communities to ensure these projects adhere to the President's important rate payer protection. Pledge to rapidly expand our nation's electricity grid and end the Biden Administration's ruinous rise in electricity prices. We are securing critical minerals. We have strategically reorganized the department, consolidating five offices into a single office of critical Minerals and Energy Innovation. This creates one hub across DOE, the national labs and external partners to manage the full supply chain, from mining and processing to magnets and batteries.

We have committed 1 billion in existing funding to strengthen domestic supply chains, reduce reliance on foreign adversaries and restore American manufacturing. We are restoring fiscal discipline. We inherited a department that prioritized political objectives over energy security, the restructured Office of Energy dominance. Financing is correcting that we have reviewed every loan commitment of taxpayer dollars, restructuring or eliminating over 80 billion in loans, more than 80% of the Biden era loan portfolio, and redirecting that capital toward projects that strengthen reliability and American energy production, including an historic \$26 billion loan to the Southern Company that will lower costs and expand grid capacity in multiple states.

Finally, we are preparing for the future. America is open for business again, and trillions of dollars are being invested in American infrastructure for manufacturing and data centers. Meeting this moment requires abundant, reliable and secure energy, and that is exactly what this budget delivers. As Secretary of Energy, I'm honored to lead this effort for President Trump and to work with this committee to strengthen America's energy future.

Q&A

Please find attached the full Politico transcript.

Chairman Kennedy brought the hearing to a close.