

OPENING STATEMENT

THE HONORABLE ED PASTOR
ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Hearing on the Department of Energy FY 2011 Budget
March 24, 2010

Good afternoon. We have before us today the Secretary of Energy, Dr. Steven Chu. He is here to present the Administration's fiscal year 2011 budget request for the Department of Energy. Mr. Secretary, congratulations on your first year, we look forward to your insights into this budget request.

As the nation continues to discuss the merits and structure of a comprehensive energy policy for the 21st century, the Department of Energy must take a leadership role in the transformation of our energy sector. I firmly support the principle that innovation, technology, and research and development should be at the very core of our national effort to this end.

I do believe we can invent and invest our way out of our energy problems and that government should help lead the way. That is not to

say government is the answer—the government’s role must be structured to complement the role of the private sector.

As the debate over the policies and incentives for smarter energy consumption and a more robust energy mix continue, the ultimate outcome of that discussion will be irrelevant if strong leadership and fundamental management reform are not forthcoming at the Department of Energy. Mr. Secretary, this Committee has been front and center in pushing the Department toward more robust management of its portfolio, including project management and cost estimating—we expect you to take a strong leadership role in transforming those practices at the Department to ensure that the taxpayers get the most for their hard-earned money.

I would note that over sixty percent of the Department’s funding is associated with maintaining and securing the nuclear stockpile and clean-up associated with the legacy of radioactive waste. While I understand that the Nuclear Posture Review is further delayed, this Committee continues to insist on a comprehensive and enduring policy foundation for our nuclear arsenal. I am hopeful that this Administration will answer the questions posed by the Committee in 2007, placing the requirements of the weapons complex in the context of our future military requirements.

This Subcommittee continues to have concerns about the President's decision regarding Yucca Mountain, given the absence of a repository will affect not only our energy portfolio for the future, but also the cleanup of radioactive waste at DOE sites and disposal of spent fuel from military operations. Several of those sites are represented by Members on this Subcommittee, so rest assured that we intend to be involved in decisions affecting the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and defense waste.

Mr. Secretary, I look forward to hearing from you today about how the fiscal year 2011 budget request will help address the energy and national security challenges we face and how your management plans will ensure efficient planning and execution. I expect we will be working together to address the challenges ahead, but I will again remind you that cooperation and respect are two-way streets. This Committee will not "rubber stamp" the DOE budget request for fiscal year 2011. I expect that there will be areas where we disagree, but I do hope that we can work through those differences in a collaborative, bipartisan manner.

Mr. Secretary, I would ask that you ensure that the hearing record, responses to the questions for the record, and any supporting

information requested by the Subcommittee are delivered in final form to the Subcommittee no later than four weeks from time you receive them.

I also ask that if Members have additional questions they would like to submit for the record, that they please do so to this subcommittee by 5:00 PM this afternoon.

With those opening comments, I would like to yield to our ranking member, Mr. Frelinghuysen, for any opening comments that he would like to make.