

March 20, 2026

The Honorable Susan Collins
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
413 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
154 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Kennedy
Chair, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Energy & Water Development Subcommittee
437 Russell Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Collins, Chair Kennedy, and Vice Chair Murray:

As we face dramatic growth in energy demand across the country, the U.S. must continue investing in energy innovation to ensure affordable and reliable energy for all Americans. The federal portfolio of research, development, demonstration, and deployment (RDD&D) programs at the Department of Energy (DOE) has proved crucial to placing the U.S. at the leading edge of developing next generation technologies to power homes and businesses and move people and goods. As this leadership position slides backwards on the global stage and we face increasing pressure from energy demand, Congress must continue to support these crucial engines of innovation with robust funding in the FY 2027 appropriations process.

We applaud appropriators for provisions in the FY26 Energy and Water Development appropriations title that reassert congressional intent and Congress' power of the purse. These include guardrails to ensure DOE carries out future spending according to congressional intent in spending tables and reversing R&D indirect cost caps imposed by DOE in 2025. While these steps taken to bolster spending guardrails are commendable, we encourage appropriators to further assert congressional authority. Namely, we support concrete legislative language in FY27 that ensures DOE staffing minimums as well as legislative language that explicitly precludes grant terminations, renegotiations, or future funding denials due to misalignment with agency goals. Such policies ensure business certainty, enable long-term investments, and help restore faith in the private sector to continue doing business with the federal government.

Federal investment in energy RDD&D has provided essential support to enable private sector to innovate from the earliest stages and help bridge a path to commercial scale. Energy innovation has enjoyed strong sustained bipartisan support in the past decade across both Republican and Democratic administrations and congressional leadership. In the face of rising energy demand and growing costs, we are hopeful that Congress will recognize the importance of continued support.

It is imperative that Congress build on this momentum and continue robust support for DOE and other federal

energy programs in the FY27 appropriations process, positioning the U.S. to lead in global energy innovation, commercialization, and deployment. Our energy sector is the backbone of our economy, and these investments are fundamental to advancing American manufacturing, meeting rising energy demand, boosting reliability, and keeping costs down for consumers and businesses. We encourage Congress to continue robust support for the following programs and ensure successful implementation through additional guardrails:

- Invest in early-stage innovation through the Office of Technology Commercialization, Office of Science, Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation, and Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office.
- Continue support for infrastructure modernization and deployment programs, such as the Office of Energy Dominance Financing, to foster domestic manufacturing opportunities and ensure the availability of reliable, affordable energy solutions.
- Provide adequate program direction and staffing levels within each program to enable successful implementation of mandate and authorization. This includes obligating annual funds appropriated by the Committee, conducting due diligence and oversight on projects/awards, and meeting obligation to DOE's awardees and contractors.

Given that many of the undersigned stakeholders are small business leaders, it is important to highlight the stalled reauthorization of the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) initiatives, which lapsed at the beginning of FY2026. While reauthorization falls outside committee jurisdiction, we emphasize that robust funding for DOE applied research programs directly translates into increased support for SBIR and STTR once these programs are restored. Congress should also allocate funds specifically for technical assistance programs to recruit a broad pool of competitive applications and catalyze successful awardees on a pathway to commercialization; examples include the Federal and State Technology (FAST) Partnership Program, DOE's Phase 0 Assistance Program, and Technical and Business Assistance (TABAs).

SBIR and STTR have empowered small businesses and entrepreneurs to drive technological innovation and stimulate local economic growth for over 40 years, and these programs serve as the lynchpin in the small business R&D ecosystem. The SBIR track record speaks for itself. [Over 2,100 firms supported by SBIR grants](#) have been acquired, and over 800 have gone public.

We strongly urge you to stand beside the energy research and development community, including small business innovators and entrepreneurs, through robust federal funding in FY27 for energy innovation and commercialization.

Sincerely,

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