



**Opening Statement**  
**Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.)**  
**Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**Hearing on Department of Energy's FY 2016 Budget**  
**Feb. 12, 2015**

“Secretary Moniz, it is a pleasure to see you again and appreciate this opportunity to discuss the President’s fiscal year 2016 budget request for the Department of Energy.

“Overall, I am pleased that the proposal calls for more than a 9 percent increase over last year.

“The President’s proposal demonstrates a strong commitment to investments we need to build a competitive, innovative energy economy.

“As the overview of this budget highlights, the Department is entrusted with four critical responsibilities:

“One, maintaining our nuclear arsenal and playing a key role in our non-proliferation activities around the globe; protecting public health through a long term commitment to cleaning up the legacy of nuclear weapons production.

“It’s often overlooked that those two responsibilities typically account for more than half of the DOE budget. And I should just say you know we’ve discussed many times that Washington state is home to one of the world’s largest nuclear cleanup projects and the people of my state fully expect the Department of Energy to honor its responsibilities to finish this job.

“And as Sen. Murray noted in our budget discussions, that the budget contains some mixed news for Hanford in Fiscal Year 2016. While the department is devoting significant resources to cleaning up the waste treatment plant and tank farms, there’s concern that we may be giving some of the other cleanup priorities short shift. So we need to make sure the resources are there for DOE to live up to the commitment to cleanup this waste. And it is also the case that workers at Hanford have been exposed to chemical vapors with uncertain health effects, multiple times. And this is certainly unacceptable. So I appreciate your attention to this issue, it has been critical. And it is

critical that we not only establish a process here that works with this department and this contractor, but that it also works in the future. And so very much appreciate the attention to that.

“But, besides those two priorities, DOE is also responsible, through your energy innovation agenda, for transitioning to a low-carbon energy future and providing the backbone for our nation’s research economy.

“I want to commend you for the strong commitment to the advanced energy agenda reflected in the President’s budget. This is a research community that has made much of the revolutionary change in our energy economy possible.

“Wind and solar power production have tripled since 2008. Gasoline consumption has dropped over 8 percent since 2005, the electricity grid is becoming more resilient with wider deployment of smart grid and distributed technologies.

“Gas prices are lower now, but we know they won’t stay that way permanently.

“So DOE and the labs like the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, and many others, have led the way in developing transportation alternatives – such as advances in engine technologies, light-weight materials, battery technologies, biofuels -- all critical to ensuring consumers are better insulated from price fluctuations in oil and gasoline that regularly cause hardships.

“The research, development, and deployment activities of the Department of Energy are driving economic transformation.

“I am pleased to see the proposed increases for the Department’s Office of Electricity, include:

- A 94% increase in Smart Grid R&D;
- A 75% increase for Energy Storage; and
- A 133% increase in Infrastructure Security and Energy Restoration.
- And a strong commitment to cyber security Research and Development.

“Similarly, I am pleased that the 42 percent increase proposed for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy, which is shepherding innovations in everything from building efficiencies, to drop-in biofuels to new fuel cell applicants.

“So this budget boosts the Office of Science a modest 5 percent, but we must make sure we are continuing to invest in our key innovation infrastructure—which is fundamental to the advances in low-carbon energy technologies. We need to build on our recent track-records of success.

“I think the key thing that we want to get across about the budget, is the energy transformation currently underway in our country is having a profound effect on our competitiveness of our economy. Decoupling the growth in our economy from energy growth is like ushering in a new era of energy productivity.

“For decades, American energy consumption increased as the economy grew. In the past seven years, however, we have dramatically decreased that trend.

“From 2007 to 2014, our economy grew over 8 percent. At the same time, energy consumption actually fell by 2.5 percent.

“This represents a dramatic increase in our energy productivity.

“By contrast, during the same period, 1990 to 2000, our GDP growth of 40 percent was linked to growth in the U.S. energy consumption of 17 percent.

“This recent decrease in the demand for energy represents billions of dollars of savings to American families and to businesses each year. Resources that can be spent, or invested in other areas of the economy.

“Delinking economic growth from one of its most expensive inputs, energy, will help us to continue America’s improved economic competitiveness for the future.

“I’m also pleased this budget will also continue our national commitment to the deployment of efficiency and renewable energy technologies.

“New clean energy technologies -- renewables, efficiency, and natural gas – generated over \$50 billion of investment in 2014.

“I look forward to the budget proposal which would put significant emphasis on modernizing and strengthening our electricity grid.

“Although our nation’s grid is vital to our economy and way of life, we need to make sure that it is even more efficient and resilient—and likewise serves as a platform for innovation.

“We have made good progress as a country in improving this. But now is the time to expand our existing efforts to integrate our technologies that will transform more energy transmission and distribution.

“One of the new programs in the budget would accelerate the replacement of outdated transformers and other important grid components with new technology.

“This would make the grid more resilient, particularly in response to disruptions that could be caused by disasters or cyber attacks.

“The program would also help state and local governments as they deploy new transmission and energy storage systems to the 21st century.

“Finally, Mr. Secretary, I look forward to your upcoming release of the Quadrennial Energy Review.

“I expect that we will have a chance to take a broader look at the challenges that we face, that can’t be done in just one budget year.

“I look forward to working with you, Chairman Murkowski and my colleagues here on the Committee to ensure that the Department of Energy continues to play a vital role in meeting our nation’s challenges. Thank you.”

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