



Governors'
**Wind &
Solar Energy**
Coalition

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Iowa
Gov. Terry E. Branstad
Chairman
Rhode Island
Gov. Gina M. Raimondo
Vice Chairman

April 19, 2016

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
& Water Development
Committee of Appropriations
U.S. Senate
S-128, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Diane Feinstein
Ranking Member, Subcommittee
on Energy & Water Development
Committee of Appropriations
U.S. Senate
S-128, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy
& Water Development
Committee of Appropriations
House of Representatives
2362-B House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member, Subcommittee
on Energy & Water Development
Committee of Appropriations
House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Alexander and Simpson and Ranking Members Feinstein and Kaptur:

We write to request that both the Senate and House Energy and Water Development Appropriations Subcommittees provide robust Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) funding for the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy's Wind program, and Solar program. Our hope is that these programs can be funded at levels that will drive further diversification of our nation's energy portfolio.

Adequately funding these programs will help accelerate the modernization and reliability of the nation's electric grid and continue development of wind and solar energy in our states. We also request your Subcommittee's support for the Regional Clean Energy Innovation Partnerships proposal to help states and other entities to promote clean energy innovation.

Without DOE's support, many utility-scale solar projects would not have been possible. In addition, Federal efforts to help solar compete with conventional energy sources has yielded tremendous results. Since 2008, the average installed cost of solar has declined more than 70 percent, making solar a more affordable choice for consumers. While equipment costs for photovoltaic panels and inverters have declined dramatically, there is still much work to be done on remaining costs such as engineering, permitting, and on-site labor costs.

DOE's support also made possible the nation's first offshore wind farm near Rhode Island's Block Island. DOE has also been instrumental in promoting the benefits of taller wind towers and longer turbine blades to improve energy capture and to reduce wind energy costs throughout the Midwestern states. DOE's Wind program has also facilitated the technology advancements that have allowed these benefits to spread throughout the nation, expanding most recently to the Southeastern states that traditionally were thought to have little potential for wind energy development. These are just a few of the examples of how DOE's work has helped shape our states' energy future.

DOE's wind and solar energy programs support research and technology development at the National Laboratories and with private sector innovators located in our states. This research will improve wind and solar production efficiency, lower consumer costs, and help ensure that America remains the world's leader in the clean energy technologies. We strongly support federal funding that will allow DOE to work with industry to continue developing state-of-the-art technologies, and to provide more technical assistance to states' legislatures and regulatory agencies as they consider policies affecting the deployment of clean energy technologies.

Some have said that the development of wind and solar technologies is essentially complete. However, despite great strides over the past few years, these technologies are still young compared to conventional energy technologies like those that use fossil fuels. Even the conventional technologies are still being improved through research, so to arrest continuing wind and solar research now would certainly be short-sighted.

This funding will also support important wildlife impact mitigation technologies, market barrier reductions, grid integration, aviation safety technology, utility scale solar projects and cutting edge offshore wind development demonstration projects as we play catch up to the United Kingdom, Denmark, and other offshore wind leaders that have nearly two decades of experience in this promising field.

In addition, the nation's electricity system is undergoing an historic modernization. New electricity distribution, storage, controls and end-use technologies, along with increasingly flexible system operating strategies, are making possible increased resilience and decreased costs to improve our economic competitiveness. DOE's Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability conducts — with National Laboratories, states, and private sector partners — much of the nation's grid modernization research, analysis, and technical assistance. That work is essential to speeding the transition to a more advanced, reliable and globally cost-competitive grid.

Finally, we also recommend funding for DOE's proposed Regional Clean Energy Innovation Partnerships. As was noted in the National Research Council's 2012 Report, *Rising to the Challenge*, "historically, federally funded R&D has not been connected to state and regional industrial development. Bridging that gap can create the local talent and technology base needed to convert these U.S. investments into domestic companies, industries, and jobs." By supporting regional partnerships, DOE can empower states and other non-federal entities to help promote local clean energy innovation.

Robust federal funding for energy research and development helps ensure that future generations of Americans are the beneficiaries of the nation's tradition of energy innovation and economic competitiveness. We respectfully request that the final energy and water appropriations bill provide these funding levels to support an affordable, clean, and reliable electricity system from generation to end-use by consumers and businesses in our states.

Sincerely,



Terry E. Branstad
Chairman and
Governor of Iowa



Gina M. Raimondo
Vice Chairman and
Governor of Rhode Island

cc:

Members, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development

Members, U.S. Senate Finance Committee

Members, U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Members, U.S. House of Representatives Subcommittee on Energy & Water Development

Members, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Commerce and Energy

The Honorable Ernie Moniz, Secretary, U.S. Department of Energy

The Honorable Brian Deese, Counselor to the President

The Honorable Shaun Donovan, Director, White House Office of Management & Budget

The Honorable Christy Goldfuss, Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality

Ali Zaidi, White House Office of Management & Budget