EXHIBIT D

House Appropriations / Energy and Water Development on FY27 Energy Dept Budget

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Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

The committee will come to order. Mr. Secretary. Good afternoon, sir. I have some prepared remarks, but I want to start with profound thanks to you and your wonderful team at DOE, to the President, for all you are doing in your tenure.

You have been a partner, you've been a friend. We have worked so well together, and I know where your great heart is in this position. So profound. Thanks for me in my role as Chairman and as an American.

Thank you sir to everyone on the dais and our friends coming in. I'd like to welcome Secretary Chris Wright to the energy and water subcommittee this afternoon. Secretary Wright, thank you for joining us today to discuss the Fiscal Year 2027, budget request for the Department of Energy. I would like to take a moment to express my deep appreciation for your continued partnership.

Over the last 14 months, your commitment to maintaining strong lines of communication has been invaluable, and I look forward to continuing to work closely with you as we develop the Fiscal Year 2027 bill, Mr. Secretary the department has continued at an aggressive pace under the Trump administration, and the past year has demonstrated the department's clear commitment to furthering American energy abundance in the Fiscal Year 2027 budget request, the administration continues to prioritize expanding domestic energy production, strengthening technological leadership and enhancing National Security work that is essential to maintaining America's competitiveness. I'm encouraged by the department's continued focus on critical research areas, including high performance computing, artificial intelligence, quantum information science, nuclear energy and critical minerals. In November, President Trump issued an executive order

launching the Genesis mission, an ambitious effort to advance discovery science, enhance our national security, accelerate new energy technologies through the use of artificial intelligence platforms that bring together the national labs and industry collaborators and leverages the department's high performance computing, quantum systems and artificial intelligence expertise. I look forward to hearing more about the department's plans to further this initiative, while also ensuring that these investments do not come at the expense of the Department of Energy's core Scientific Discovery mission that is essential to American scientific and technological leadership.

As many know, I have long championed an American dominance in energy strategy because affordable, abundant energy benefits every American, however, nuclear energy is where my heart is must remain foundational to that strategy. The administration has appropriately placed nuclear energy at the forefront of its US energy policy, beginning with the 2025 executive orders aimed at accelerating deployment of advanced reactor technologies and expanding domestic nuclear capacity, with the support of this committee, the department has taken important steps to support demonstration and pilot projects and to strengthen the domestic fuel cycle, including increasing us enrichment capabilities and supporting efforts to reprocess used nuclear fuel and On that point, I am a big fan of reprocessing, and Secretary Walsh is been so strong on this. Thank you. It's long overdue in America, and I thank you for that.

However, additional federal investment is essential to ensure the timely commercialization of these advanced technologies and to establish a secure and resilient domestic nuclear fuel supply chain without sustained and targeted support, the United States risks ceding leadership in nuclear innovation and undermining our long term energy security. I am pleased to see that the budget request continues to prioritize funding for our nation's nuclear deterrent. Proposing an increase of 29% to the National Nuclear Security Administration. Another side note, thank you for Brandon Williams, our former colleague and a great, great administrator, the Fiscal 2027 request continues strong investments in sustaining and modernizing the stockpile, recapitalization, production infrastructure and maintaining the scientific stool, tools and workforce to uphold the strength of our nuclear deterrent.

Communist China their nuclear build up, Russia's continued aggression and the war in the Persian Gulf underscore how rapidly the global security environment is shifting, and our nuclear deterrent remains indispensable to the United States national defense. At the same time, it is imperative that the Department of Energy ensure prudent investments that provide the necessary oversight so that taxpayer dollars are spent responsibly. Secretary Wright, thank you again for being here today. I look forward to working with you and my colleagues to develop a fiscally responsible bill that will strengthen our national security and advance American energy dominance.

I will now turn to my Ranking Member my colleague, Ms. Kaptur, for her opening statement. Ms. Kaptur,

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, good afternoon, and thank you all for joining us. Chairman Fleischmann, Secretary Wright, thank you for appearing before us today. Energy Security is national security, and that has been the guiding principle of the subcommittee for decades, and has never been more urgent than it is right now, nearly 50 years ago, as our nation's economy reeled from the first Arab oil embargo, President Carter and our predecessors in Congress created the US Department of Energy. Their vision was clear, America must never again be held hostage by foreign energy suppliers.

I'm trying to read my own writing here. Okay, with steadfast bipartisan commitment, our nation has made remarkable progress. US crude oil production has grown from about 9.6 million barrels per day in 1970 to 13.6 million last year, we are a net petroleum exporter, and yet somehow, American households are still at the mercy of global energy markets and prices. Energy bills are doubling, and gas prices have risen $1 or more per gallon.

Diesel fuel is emptying the pockets of our transport industries. It's a really serious problem. I come from a major distribution hub. When Russia invaded Ukraine, oil prices spiked worldwide.

We see it again right now, as President Trump's invasion of Iran has sent energy prices soaring for American consumers since the war began in late February, gas prices have jumped more than $1 a gallon, and the national

average hit $4.12 this week, the gasoline price spike in March was the largest single month increase on record. Families are paying 10 to 20 more dollars every time they fill their tanks. In the Energy Information Administration says prices may not return to pre conflict levels until 2027 as we've seen repeatedly, when gas prices rose in 1956, 1973, 1978, 1990 and 2008. For example, our nation endures deep economic downturns.

How can prices be going up when we are pumping more oil? Engines are more efficient, and we've brought on massive natural gas supplies to add to our energy portfolio. Why now our constituents are enduring the largest global oil supply disruption in history, exceeding that of the Arab oil embargo in the 1970s that prompted a strong policy response from the United States. We must again rise to the new occasion, and I know everyone here cares about that as well.

It is not just gasoline. Electricity prices in just my region of Ohio have doubled. Utilities coast to coast have proposed or implemented rate hikes after more than 111 million cut affecting 100 and a million 100 and 11 million customers. 111, residential.

Natural gas prices are up 13% since the start of this administration. More than 80 million Americans are struggling to pay their utility bills, yet the President's budget eliminates the Weatherization Assistance Program impacting the wallets of over hundreds of thousands of households across our nation. I don't think that's such a good idea, and working families in northwestern Ohio, across the Midwest and in every corner of this country are being squeezed hard at the pump with their electric bills and at the checkout counter. The answer to this crisis is not less energy innovation, it is competitive domestic energy markets and innovation of more efficient power production, fair pricing and energy independence in perpetuity require we diversify our energy portfolio, no single fuel source, no monopoly, no single conflict, and no single cartel or region can hold the American economy hostage.

That is exactly what this department was created to do. And may I observe your department should play no favorites. We have to have our fingers on all the keys. This budget moves in the opposite direction, the Office of critical Minerals and Energy Innovation is slashed by $1.9 billion that's a 63% cut.

That's shocking. The Weatherization Assistance Program, which helps low income families reduce their energy bills, is eliminated entirely. I'd like to know what the substitute is for that. The Office of Science is cut by 1.1 billion and ARPA E, which has generated 15 billion in private sector investment, just up from 4 billion in federal funding, is nearly cut in half.

These are the foundations of America's future, energy innovation, energy security and energy affordability. And gutting them while families are paying $4 a gallon for gas is unconscionable. Further, this budget proposes to cancel and repurpose nearly $20 billion in Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act programs. This will halt critical US energy modernization in manufacturing industries, which I represent so many of what's left in America.

And the President says he wants to keep and further with farmers in agricultural America facing a really rough year due to tariffs and displaced global markets. Why is the administration dawdling with approving year round E15? And for me, that's not even enough. That isn't very adventure.

Some roughly half the corn and soy beans produced just in my Congressional district are now dedicated to renewable fuels, and let me tell you all across agricultural America that holds true, and this isn't going to be a good year. We have to do more to help our farmers. Yet the stalled Farm Bill and year round E15 authorization for our country await action while the President extended E15 only temporarily to cover the summer months. Brazil has E60.

Technology in our nation can get up to E30. I really don't understand why the administration is punting in such a vital energy sector turning to nuclear security. We, both Chairman and I, all of US support maintaining a safe, secure and effective nuclear deterrent. Our world is more dangerous, not less.

And Russia continues to threaten nuclear escalation as China rapidly expands its arsenal, Iran, North Korea and other actors collaborate and pose growing risks your budget requests, $32.8 billion for NNSA, Mr. Secretary a 29% increase driven by a $7 billion increase for weapons activities, but NNSA is already managing 28 major construction projects worth more than $30 billion GAO has found that NNSA project cost overruns have more than doubled since 2023 rising to 4.8 billion, and all of us must be good stewards

of taxpayer dollars. We can't pour more money into these programs without strong oversight and project management reform. What deeply concerns me is the other side of your ledger, defense, nuclear, Non-Proliferation, and it's essentially flat. The budget before us cuts up to 26% of the programs that secure nuclear materials and prevent weapons from falling into the wrong hands, does President Trump?

I think President Trump needs to be informed that his budget does exactly that at a time when nuclear threats are growing, these are exactly the programs we should be strengthening, not cutting a strong deterrent in the ability to stop adversaries from acquiring nuclear weapons must go hand in hand, if not, there is no security, Mr. Chairman, in conclusion, energy prices are rising. Our grid is under strain, and the world is more dangerous, particularly, again, in the oil kingdoms. This is the moment to invest in American energy innovation, not throttle it or impose higher energy costs on our households. This is the moment of disciplined reinvestment.

We must modernize commercial nuclear power plants with real accountability, new technology, not blank checks, and that is why last week, I was so very grateful, along with the Department of Energy, to announce the award by the department to the Great Lakes region, which will produce 1/3 and already does our nation's nuclear power. We just got to do it in a modern way with no more major mistakes, none. Nuclear reactor safety and workforce development are paramount in a region where nuclear mismanagement harm the reputation of a technology advanced by our outstanding nuclear navy, this is the moment to strengthen every tool we have for nuclear safety and to prevent nuclear threats, not to hollow out these programs. Thank you for your attention, and I look forward to hearing the Secretary and to the discussion ahead.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. Ms. Kaptur, I will now turn to the distinguished Ranking Member for the full committee. Ms. DeLauro for her opening statement.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.)

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Kaptur, want to say a thank you to Secretary Wright for taking the time to be here and to

answer the committee's questions today, let me commend Ranking Member Kaptur, Chairman Fleischmann, along with other members of this subcommittee, for their work on the Fiscal Year 2026, funding bill. Everyone showed that we can come together to forge a bipartisan compromise in this body and write a bill that passes overwhelmingly. It is unfortunate that the spirit of cooperation did not find its way into the President's budget. A budget request for the Department of Energy, the Trump administration's budget would do away with all of the progress we have made, it would revert back to the steep cuts that worsen the cost of the living crisis that so many Americans are facing.

In his budget, the president proposes a 17% cut to non-defense funding across the department. There is no question that if this were to become a reality, it would raise energy costs even higher for American families, even as they are struggling with a 40% increase in gas prices over $1 a gallon on average, caused by the President's reckless war of choice with Iran. And just the other day, the President admitted with indifference that the price of gas will likely get even higher, instead of taking any meaningful steps to bring down the soaring cost of living caused by this administration's policy, the President's budget makes the problem worse. It proposes a nearly $2 billion cut to the new Office of critical Minerals and Energy Innovation, which promotes energy efficiency, supports clean energy development and improves our energy supply chains.

All of these things make energy more affordable for American families. But instead of investing in these programs, the Trump administration's plan is to take a hatchet to them. They even propose eliminating the Weatherization Assistance Program entirely. This is a program that helps families afford improvements to their homes to reduce energy wasted by poor insulation or drafty windows.

It is a program that saves households who participate in it nearly $400 a year on average. I guess this administration does not believe American families need that money, $400 a year on average. Regrettably, the partisanship in this budget proposal is also present in how DOE has conducted itself over the past year. In October, the Department announced the termination of over 200 projects totaling more than $7.5 billion in federal funding, exclusively in states that voted for Vice President Harris in the 2024 election.

It is impossible to interpret this as anything other than punishing voters for executing their political freedoms. It's an abuse of power so fundamentally un-American, it should unnerve every member of this committee. Over the past year, the Democrat the department recklessly sought to carry out a series of staffing reductions without giving any thought to whom they were firing. They ended happening to rehire many employees because abruptly terminating them posed a national security risk.

It turns out, we do, in fact, need the technical experts who maintain our nuclear arsenal. All of this chaos only adds to the confusion and uncertainty that the administration, that the administration is imposing on American families. And you know what? American families are sick and tired of having to deal with all of this because of this administration eliminating programs, blocking grant funding for political reasons, haphazardly laying off staff and crippling the capacity of the Department of Energy offices to serve the public.

All share a common effect. They make Americans lives worse. I know my colleagues on this committee, Democrats and Republicans, we can work together to produce a bill that helps the American people, but based on this budget proposal, I do not believe the Trump administration has any clue about the challenges so many families are facing today. Day, I hope that as we move forward through the Fiscal Year 2027, in terms of that funding process, that we can forcefully reject these reckless cuts to programs that so many people rely on.

Secretary Wright, I look forward to hearing your testimony and to being able to answer your being able to answer our questions today. I thank you and I yield back,

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. Ms. DeLauro, Mr. Secretary thank you again for being here today, without objection. Your full written testimony will be entered into the record. With that in mind, we would ask that you please summarize your remarks in five minutes.

Secretary Wright, you are now recognized.

Chris Wright

Thank you. Chairman Fleischmann, Ranking Member Kaptur, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify 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 to the American people. Let me highlight what this looks like.

We have taken decisive steps to restore grid reliability, 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 could increase by up to 100 fold, by 2030 due to supply shortfalls if we had continued on the previous trajectory. This action and the market response to our actions 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, which is what matters with an electricity grid, hydrocarbons, hydro and nuclear power provided 95% of the electricity. Wind, solar and batteries provided 2% far less than the 3% that was derived from burning wood and trash.

The lesson when reliability is on the line. Dispatchable energy shows up. We work 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 upon inauguration last January.

This is a win for America, a win for our allies, a win for global energy 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 national security is anchored 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 program simultaneously and plutonium pits than at any time

since the Cold War, we are driving a nuclear renaissance. Our efforts span next generation reactor pilot programs, reestablishing American nuclear enrichment capacity and domestic nuclear fuel fabrication, reprocessing of spent fuel and a pathway to spent fuel permanent storage.

I am proud to share that we will have multiple advanced reactor prototypes critical by Americans 250th birthday. We are driving hard to meet President Trump's goal of 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 cleanup efforts, while seeking to redevelop cleaned up sites like Port Smith, Paducah, Hanford and others, we launched the Genesis mission to bring a eyes immense promise to scientific and technological innovation and our nation. 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. 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 industry to accelerate scientific discovery. We are winning the AI race and lowering energy cross 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 pay or protection pledge to rapidly expand our nation's electricity grid and the Biden and to reverse 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, 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 reshore 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 reviewed every loan commitment of taxpayer dollars, restructuring or eliminating over $80 billion in loans, more than 80% of the Biden air loan portfolio, and we are redirecting that capital towards 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 AI 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 work with this committee to strengthen America's energy future. I'm also honored to partner with the great men and women you see sitting behind me and that are populated around the country in the Department of Energy's efforts. Thank you so much.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you, Secretary Wright, we will now begin with questions, starting with my own, and I anticipate that we'll probably have two rounds, so I'm going to limit my questions to five minutes and ask that my colleagues do the same. Mr. Secretary in May of last year, the Department initiated a review of financial assistance awards to identify and eliminate wasteful spending of taxpayer dollars and to ensure that awards of advanced, affordable and reliable energy was there for the American people. Mr. Secretary can you please provide the committee an update on this review?

Chris Wright

Sir, yes, it was quite an ambitious endeavor. There were over 2200 projects that were reviewed through a critical lens of what will benefit American taxpayers, most importantly, American rate payers, American consumers of energy across the country, we were hampered by multiple factors, and I have

to call out one. It's the Senate, not the house, but every single Senate confirmed appointee to the Department of Energy was filibustered for the first time in American history. I did not get a meaningful amount of the leadership of the Department of Energy until late October.

We worked all summer long, evaluating projects, discussing, debating, pushing back both ways. And then we bring in the leadership of these various departments. Comes in in October, and quite understandably, they all wanted to engage and involve themselves in these critical decisions in the departments they were tapped to lead and to hold, but we so we rereviewed 2200 projects to make those critical decisions, of which projects advance the interest of American ratepayers, of American taxpayers and our national security, giving the tie to the runner. If a project had a credible way to be helpful, we supported it.

We've had hundreds of dialogs with applicants, back and forth. Many projects were readjusted to better. Line that the applicants themselves said, Yeah, we only put that in because we were told if we did that, we would get money. So we did a rigorous business evaluation, unfortunately, of a lot of projects that didn't even have a business plan or a credible pathway to success, but I am happy to say that effort has finally come to a completion, not as fast as I would have liked, but a number of factors out of my control.

But we have finished that that effort, and we are keen to move forward with the majority of the projects which did pass, either straight up or through restructuring and on we go.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you for that endeavor on your part and on the part of the entire department. Thank you, sir, Mr. Secretary in your testimony, in your statement, you talked about the genesis mission. And I'd like to ask you a couple of questions in my remaining time, in your view, what are the short, medium and long term goals of the Genesis mission, and how will the National Lab and industry partners get you there? And then my follow up question is, what is the single most impactful example of the Genesis mission success that you can describe for each of the Office of Science and NNSA?

Chris Wright

Wow, yeah. Look, the Genesis mission, to me is, is an opportunity of a lifetime, as I mentioned, this is really the third United States, large scale mobilization of our scientific resources, which is mostly housed in our national labs, but our but also in our universities. And private industry, we hear a lot about giant AI investments for economic improvement, for advancing services, for doing all sorts of tremendous things, but but private industry does not think they cannot invest in understanding what dark matter is, or how to understand how plasma instabilities behave, and therefore how to get to viable fusion energy, how to develop new advanced materials. And maybe personally, most exciting to me, we can understand at the small protein folding molecular level, pathogens and causes of disease in Americans, we can take a number of serious conditions, think cancers that today are death sentences, and turn them into manageable conditions.

Literally millions of lives will ultimately be saved by the Genesis mission. This is not an easy mission. This is all 17 national labs. This is taking the data sets from fundamental scientific research, putting them in a fashion where they can be harvested from AI the minds and innovation within our labs, across our universities and in private industry, and focusing on one effort we have to speed the rate of scientific innovation to better energize our country, to supercharge our ability to deliver healthcare services, to protect and shepherd our nuclear arsenal and to understand and defend from foes abroad with their capabilities of today and with the capabilities that are going to evolve going forward.

Thank you all for supporting the initial funding for the Genesis mission. I hope we will continue to expand and grow that effort. This is not replacing basic science. This is supercharging our pace of scientific and engineering innovation.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you, Mr. Secretary thank you. I could not be more pleased with that response. Thank you, sir. At this time, I would like to recognize the distinguished Ranking Member of the subcommittee, Ms. Kaptur, for five minutes.

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Secretary Wright, you got your arms around the department, and we're full steam ahead. I wanted to ask you, starting with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the department proposes canceling $15.2 billion in funding for what were competitively awarded energy projects. My questions are, does this budget contemplate additional project terminations beyond those already announced. And is there any path to reconsider?

Are all projects being reconsidered? Particularly, I have to put in a plug here for manufacturing America, where energy costs would be saved for companies that truly are in global competition and energy could make or break the company. And how is the department assessing which projects will be canceled which will not be canceled, and how do we work with you on that?

Chris Wright

Thank you Representative Castor Kaptur, sorry, for that question, and thank you for your passion for manufacturing and blue collar jobs in this country. You've you've led in that for decades, as you know, and as we've discussed before, I share, I share that particular interest. It is a deep passion of mine. So on reconsideration, 100% we've already had a number of those where.

Have made decisions in the department. We have communicated those, some of those last year, and then we get feedback from the applicant saying, I don't think you read my thing right. Will you hear me out? We say, of course, we will hear you out.

That's our job. We've had a number of projects where we've made decisions. We've been clarified and educated and thought, you know, you're right. I think we misunderstood what you were doing there, or we thought it wasn't viable because we didn't see that connecting step that makes the math works.

So absolutely we are willing and ready to engage those you referenced a lot of the projects or the dollars that we did cancel. Frankly, there were a lot of projects large in scale that had no no they're there no meat on the bones. Hundreds, hundreds of projects of hundreds of millions of dollars that didn't

have a business plan that would basically just spend the taxpayer money, and we'd have nothing new at the end. We'd have no new factory that stayed open, or no new innovation that could have a business based on we had giant amount of money going to massive American companies to produce mac and cheese that they already know how to produce, but to produce it with a little bit lower greenhouse gas emissions.

How does that justify spending huge American dollars to deliver the same product but make it a little bit more expensive? Those are simply not projects, I think, in the American taxpayer interest, but there are many that were and well over 80% of all these projects we reviewed in detail passed and are going on, and did we make mistakes in some of them? Absolutely. And are we willing to reengage?

You bet.

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)

Well, that's good news. Thank you. Thank you. I know you'll give them careful review, but I've just seen so many places close in my career, and II just think where it's possible to advance manufacturing.

We should do it in view of the nature of the competition that many of these companies face. So thank you. On that I wanted to go to the nuclear deterrent issue. GAO reported in February that cost overruns on NSA 28 major construction projects have doubled, more than doubled, rising to $4.8 billion so the plutonium pit production program is split across two sites, and it will likely cost well over $20 billion and still does not have a comprehensive life cycle cost estimate.

Could you kind of talk about what specific project management reforms NNSA is implementing, and when Will Congress receive a complete life cycle cost estimate for the pit production?

Chris Wright

Again. Thank Thank you, Representative Kaptur for raising that question. It is a another serious passion of mine is our Nation Security, NNSA, as you, as you recognize is more than half of our department, its management track

record over the last decade or two has not been good. Another reason, I was particularly frustrated that my minister for NNSA came in late last year, but we have tried to look at that endeavor, how it works, how the management incentives of people, and how to align, if you have X responsibility, but you're not empowered to do the things that are needed to deliver that responsibility, then the responsibility and the empowerment are misaligned.

So we have realigned incentives, empowerment and responsibilities, so basically trying to run it more like a business, and I'm happy to say, I think we're seeing rapid progress there. The Pit production at Los Alamos has ramped up rapidly. We are both moving out old legacy equipment while actually manufacturing pits. We have people at the second site that you referenced that's going to be at Savannah River.

Don't Don't wait till we get that done. Come on out to Los Alamos and work with us in pit production today and developing the new lines and how we're going to manufacture this going forward, I think we're seeing a rapid acceleration in our capacity to build and construct pits, and that will come with a very critical eye to the design of the facility that will be at Savannah River for pit production. We're learning because we're producing pits again for the first time in decades, maybe the original plan we laid out wasn't ideal. Maybe we can be smarter, maybe we can be more efficient.

About that, you raise a very real question, a big issue.

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)

Thank you. Glad you're got both hands on it.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. Ms. Kaptur, at this time, I would like to recognize my friend, the Distinguished Chairman of the interior subcommittee of appropriations and a former Chair of this committee, and he represents the great Idaho reservation, my friend and mentor. Mike Simpson,

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Secretary I appreciate you achieving your goal of last year of visiting all of the DOE labs throughout the country. And I wasn't

going to say this out of respect for my Chairman, and also out of respect for my friend from the Hanford PNL area, but you saved the best for last.

Chris Wright

Representative Simpson said this at the lab when we were together, and believe me, they liked it,

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho)

And they brought a cake that said that anyway, as you know, the INL is doing amazing things, and the demonstration of micro reactors, experiment or the dome test bed is now open and operating. It presents some really exciting times for nuclear energy in the future, for these micro reactors and other reactors. And this is obvious, there's obviously a lot going on at the INL, and much of that work is reliant on unique facilities the and infrastructure that the INL has, however, given that the INL is 75 years old, a lot of that infrastructure is almost as old as the INL is. And I appreciate the fact that President Trump, and you put in this budget a proposed increase for the INL infrastructure account, and if Congress can deliver additional funding specifically to address infrastructure, recapitalization of the INL is DOE aligned to make it a priority to address the aging infrastructure at the last site?

Chris Wright

Absolutely we are, and thank you for raising that as I tour our facilities and in the great state of Tennessee, as well our legacy facilities that ushered in the nuclear age, both in the weapon side, which sounds scary, but they've actually brought great peace and stability among the great nations of the world, and launched nuclear energy, particularly at INL and the original, the original pile in the Chicago squash court, the first ever sustain control nuclear reaction is the genesis of Idaho National Lab. So when I look at those aging facilities and how important they are to their future, I want nothing more than to accelerate the replacement of that infrastructure. Now I have my own, my own fights on budget, you know, with the administration on how to do these things. So I, you know, I get some wins, I get some losses.

But can we deploy more capital to advance the infrastructure of our legacy labs faster? Absolutely, we can. Will it aid aids the mission to bring in this nuclear renaissance, to more rapidly modernize our weapon stockpile and all that absolutely will

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho)

I appreciate that, a couple other issues. This really isn't a question. It's just something I want to make you aware of that I'm sure you are the Idaho delegation sent a letter last week to you, and I didn't realize that this existed until about a year ago, as you know the DOE side in Idaho. I think same thing is true at Hanford is not owned by all of it by the DOE.

Much of is that cross hatch of land, Department of Interior, BLM land and and DOE land. And this complication, complicates the working with two different federal agencies that create some problems. I wanted just to make you aware of that, and hope that DOE and DOI and the delegation can work together to try to solve this problem, not only at Idaho, but also if it's necessary at Hanford, because DOE ought to own that land at the DOE site,

Chris Wright

I agree entirely, and I am aware of the issue, and I will work with Secretary Burgum. Of course, it's a legacy of building the railroads across the United States and this cross hatching of sections that were distributed. But yeah, I agree it's a problem we should solve, and I don't see any reason we can't solve it, but I need to work with the Interior Department to do that.

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho)

I appreciate that. One more question, recent incidents have raised concerns about the presence of unauthorized wireless signals and devices within sensitive and classified spaces across federal facilities, including those under the DOE. Those signals, whether from personal devices rogue access points or foreign surveillance tools, pose a risk to national security by creating vulnerabilities for for data or unauthorized disclosure, as DOE oversees critical nuclear and energy infrastructure, ensuring strict control over wireless activities inside secure environments is essential. What specific steps is the Department of Energy currently taking to detect, prevent and

mitigate unauthorized wireless devices within classified or sensitive DOE facilities.

And does the department maintain a comprehensive real time capability to monitor and track unauthorized wireless devices and signals in secure spaces? And how are those incidents detected, analyzed and reported to ensure accountability and continuous improvement?

Chris Wright

Yeah, so look again. You raise a huge question. The risk of cyber threats, the risk of devious behavior, even of drones over our sites, is growing rapidly. We are aware of it.

We have efforts to address it. Do we have a comprehensive plan that I can say is going to work rock solid? No, we don't yet, but that is absolutely front and center topic for us, and I think we're going to see it across the government, just growing risk of cyber espionage, misbehavior, and we need to get serious, and we need to have a better system to deal with the evolving threats.

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho)

I've always been worried about a nuclear attack, but I will tell you, a cyberattack is more scary than just about anything.

Chris Wright

Yes.

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-Idaho)

Thank you.

Chris Wright

Agreed.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. Mr. Simpson, at this time, I'd like to recognize the Ranking Member of the full committee, Ms. DeLauro, for five minutes of questions.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Wright, thanks again for coming before us today to discuss the budget request. On October 1 Secretary during a government shutdown, your department announced the termination of seven and a half billion dollars in energy awards across more than 200 projects. Those project terminations targeted states that voted for Vice President Harris in the 2024 presidential election.

The very next day, you were on CNN and told the American people that this was just a quote partial list, and that more terminations were coming, you said. And I quote, as this fall goes on, you'll see cancelations in red and blue states. End quote, that was seven months ago, so effectively, the only projects that have been terminated were targeted at blue states, including two with direct ties to my district in Connecticut, which is a very parochial interest, as you can imagine, and when this was challenged in court, your own department didn't even try to deny it. Department of Education and om of energy and OMB stipulated, admitted in a legal filing that, and I quote, a primary reason for the selection, of which DOE grant termination decisions was included in the October 2025 notice Tran was whether the grantee was located in a blue state.

End quote, the District Court this January found that this violated the fifth amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the law. You did not appeal that ruling. So let me be direct Secretary You claim that the project reviews were not conducted on political grounds. It appears that that was not true.

The courts have ruled that targeting blue states is unconstitutional. Your own lawyers have conceded that point. So given that you did not appeal the court's ruling, will you now reverse all remaining blue state terminations that were selected on the same unconstitutional basis?

Chris Wright

So let me restate again, all of the 20 270 projects we evaluated were not evaluated in any way, shape or form based on where they were, and the award location is just is just one address. Most of these awards involve cross state collaboration. They're getting supplier pieces here, the award could be in one state, and most of the money spent in another state. So this is a broad bet based efforts on where these things go, and all of the people that worked on our project review process did not take into account any politics in the evaluation of these projects.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.)

I understand you were saying that, but the district court just generally found that this violated the fifth amendment's guarantee of equal protection under the law. Your own department didn't have tried to deny that that was the decision based on the decision that was whether a grantee was located in a blue state. So Mr. Secretary your department canceled projects based on the fact that they were located in states that voted for Vice President Harris, and again, your own lawyers conceded the point in court. I'm not making making that up.

I read you the quotes. Did they lie to the judge? And do we need to look to disbarment procedures for these folks? Apparently, there's a discrepancy between what you are saying and what the court determined about those projects.

So I think that of some concern, and my hope would be that you would reinstate those projects that were denied to blue states, like my own state of the revolution, wind project in this in the state of Connecticut, because, in fact, the court ruled that illegal an illegal action. Let me move to another question, which has to do with energy rebates. You know, the administration is not just driving up the cost of gas, it's using spending freezes, Grant cancelations to attack clean energy projects, attacking federal programs that are aimed directly at helping families address rising utility bills, in addition to proposing the elimination of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, quite honestly, that's really mindless LIHEAP, a program which just through that we addressed that through another subcommittee. The budget proposes to cut major energy assistance programs at Department of Energy through the Inflation Reduction Act, Democrats in Congress provided $8 billion to DOE for the home energy rebates program.

Program puts money directly back in the hands of America's households. The rebates help consumers save money. Home Improvements on those projects that can be lower energy bills by providing up to $14,000 per household in rebates. Estimated that the programs will save households up to a billion dollars per year on energy bills and support over 50,000 US jobs.

DOE has stalled on implementing these programs for well over a year already, you could be saving households money. We're in the midst of a cost of living crisis in the United States, whether the Administration or the President believes it, it says affordability is a hoax. It is not a hoax. It is a reality.

Start to talk to real people and what's going on in their lives. So what is the timing for releasing the funds for the Home Energy whole house rebates program and for the high efficiency electric home rebates program,

Chris Wright

Those are being worked and I think in the near future.

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.)

What does that mean? The Near Future. Is it three weeks, next month, six months? What's the near future?

Chris Wright

Probably more in the in the few weeks department. But look, this is not as black and white as you represent it. You know, with all with all due respect, I have been in the energy poverty and, in fact, I've worked with the LIHEAP program as a private citizen from a decade in the past. So no administration, no administration has focused more on energy affordability than this Trump administration.

No administration even close. In fact, the Biden administration spent a massive amount of money to elevate the price of electricity, to elevate the price of gasoline, diesel, home heating, every energy source was driven up, and they spent money to drive it up. We're trying to do the opposite. We're releasing market forces to drive

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.)

Excuse me, Mr. Secretary because I'm over time and I'm mindful of the generosity of the Chair, but he's not going to be that more generous with me. But let me just say that that really is, I don't know what you're telling me. We're looking at gasoline prices go through the roof in the state of Connecticut, it's $4 plus now $6 in the state of California. You're talking about energy efficiency.

This is, this is a an administration that decided on a war of choice in Iran and driving up these costs. I don't know if anybody thought about the consequences, and I would just ask you, because this is your world, did you provide any information prior to February 28 regarding how potential strikes against Iran would impact global energy prices, and what are you doing to address the price impacts?

Chris Wright

So of course, from the day I arrived in this seat, I've spoken with the President in the whole administration about Iran and the impacts of action against Iran. So the answer to that is, of course, I'll point out we're putting to end a 47 year conflict with a nation that's threatened peace, stability, American soldiers and global supply of energy about to get nuclear weapons, and in the midst of that crisis, gasoline prices today are $1 a gallon cheaper than they were in the middle of the Biden administration with no interruption,

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.)

Sorry, I think you're living [CROSS TALK]

Chris Wright

Just the fact

Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Conn.)

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your generosity and I yield back what time I don't have left. Thank you.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. At this time, I would like to recognize a distinguished gentleman from Washington State who represents the Hanford delegation, one of the pillars of the Manhattan Project national park that we launched with our dear friends in Los Alamos several years ago. Mr. Newhouse.

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, appreciate that, Mr. Secretary it's a pleasure to see you here. Thank you for appearing before us, and I appreciated listening to your opening comments. Certainly appreciate the those regarding the your mention of the maintaining the progress for the Hanford cleanup site, and was happy to join you on your visit there. In fact, as Mr. Simpson referenced, people that you came to visit with in Richland, were just delighted to have such an informed, excited Secretary come visit and show truly, show a keen interest in the work that's going on at the lab at the Hanford Site and at that at the hydroelectric dam.

So thank you for that. But as it relates to Hanford, it's critical. It's crucial that milestones are met to clean up and treat the millions of gallons of waste on the site. As you mentioned in analyzing fiscal year 27 budget request, I just want to point out that I noticed a request to decrease the funding related to accumulating unobligated balances for partially designated facilities.

There's been a lot written about this, and I wanted to give you an opportunity, if you could, to elaborate on this. And which would this, would this request in any way decrease the effect of the low activity waste facility?

Chris Wright

So thank thank you for that question, Representative Newhouse, and it does not it would not at all impact the operations of that waste facility, which, as you were there, we were excited to get that facility up and running. It is absolutely critical that we move forward as fast as we can in cleaning up the largest legacy waste cleanup project of the United States, World War II and cold war efforts that are in your district and that are in Hanford. I think you

met some of our team that's there. I think you saw, I know you saw, the passion and the intelligence they have to move forward that clean up as fast and as good as we can.

We want to do two things in all of our cleanup sites is be as smart and wise to progress the clean up as fast as we can. If we can find ways to accelerate clean up, we would love to do it. I'd love to tell the locals we're going to be done in 30 years, and not in 70 years. That's that's important to us.

And of course, in parallel, we're also saying, Hey, these are huge lands that have nuclear savvy populations. There nuclear facilities, they're already permitted for that. Let's reindustrialize some of this. Let's build on Hanford, maybe next generation nuclear power plants, data centers, and I think you know, in some commercial processing of nuclear materials there.

Let's use these legacy nuclear sites clean up first or in parallel, but lands that are already reclaimed or were not impacted to the same degree. Let's try to bring new jobs and new opportunity there in those districts. But yes, there is, there is zero turning down of any intensity, any desire or any pace of effort on the clean up at Hanford.

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

So the request for a decreased amount of funding that relates to the unobligated balances for partially designed facilities, so that does not impact the vitrification plant, for instance, or the progress going on there.

Chris Wright

It does not,

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

Yes,

Chris Wright

It does not.

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

Very good, very good.

Chris Wright

I appreciate your passion for it, and so do the people of of Washington State.

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

Absolutely. I've got a couple other questions, and we'll probably have to go into a second round, but I certainly want to bring up a letter that several of us in the Pacific Northwest sent to you addressing the selection of the next administrator for the Bonneville Power Administration. The letter outline the need to address several issues affecting the region, including delays in expanding transmission capacity, delays in interconnection queue. Those concerns are in addition to the administrator understanding the importance of meeting the needs of preference customers, which, as you know, are utilities entitled to priority sales of federally generated power?

What's been your approach in ensuring that the next administrator is equipped to address these issues and meet the BPA customer needs.

Chris Wright

I think most people thank you for that question. I think most people don't appreciate the scale of the Bonneville Power Administration, the degree of power it markets, the percent of the long distance distribution it represents in the Pacific Northwest, and what it means for the economy. This is a major utility. You know, buried inside a government agency, it is a major utility.

And in fact, I've made personal calls around trying to get input and find people to find the right leader for that critical and utility of scale that we have. We can transform either for the better, or we can continue a little bit of stagnation, the available of electricity, the cost of electricity, the speed at which new interconnections can be made. So yes, BPA is very important to me, personally, it's very important to our department, and we need to find that right person that we can attract to come and take on that challenge. A lot of great people working on that thing, but given the scale that we need a top notch leader.

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

Appreciate that. Thank you for your efforts, and we'll talk some more in the second round. I'll yield back the balance of Ms. DeLauro's time.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

At this time, I would like to recognize Ms. Wasserman Schultz for five minutes. Thank you.

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary thanks for being here. Quite frankly, we should have had this hearing weeks ago, but the President's budget request was so late to arrive. And looking at it, it's clear why energy costs are crushing American families. But Mr. Secretary in a video yesterday, you downplayed that pain, saying you're proud of President Trump and his record of delivering a 13% spike in household utility bills.

Your own agency says gas prices are higher today than when President Biden left office, and they're still rising. I was hopeful that your department budget request would target these skyrocketing energy costs Americans face, but this request fails miserably and just continues. Use the pain that this White House continues to inflict on my constituents, Mr. Secretary since January of 2025 your department withheld over $345 million in rebate funds from Florida home owners ranging from 8000 to $14,000 when will your department release these funds to struggling for Floridians?

Chris Wright

I do not have the specific answer to that. At the tip of my tongue, I know a lot of these broad scale rebate programs we've gone through to look at carefully to make sure we get rid of fraud on these things and we deliver them.

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.)

Reclaiming my time. $345 million is a lot of damn money, and 8000 to $14,000 grants are the kinds of things that help struggling homeowners dealing with high electric bills to try to reduce those costs down, I would

think that you would know at least something about what I'm talking about when you are withholding that much money.

Chris Wright

We have looked carefully at a number of these broad based programs that deliver money to consumers for rebates, for efficiencies, for upgrades, an incredible amount of fraud in that there was DEI stuff put into that please break

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.)

And talking about. Reclaiming my time. We're talking about eight to $14,000 grant funds so that people can lower their energy costs. It's a grant program.

You're withholding $345 million of previously approved funding. I'd like you to answer for the record and get back to me specifically when those funds are going to be released. The Home Efficiency Program and the high efficiency electric home rebates are grants to states, territories and tribes, who then ensure low to moderate income households can make energy saving retrofits or buy efficient HVAC, insulation, water heaters and high efficiency appliances and cost saving electric upgrades. In Florida, these things are not optional.

They're how we can live, grow and survive in a very warm weather state. But right now, Florida's AG and Consumer Services Department is waiting for $173 million in home efficiency dollars and another 170 $2 million in high efficiency electric HOME dollars. To fulfill those rebates, your department ghosted them and left Floridians out in the heat. Similarly, your department pulled the rug out from under two of my local governments who were awarded grants, which you now refuse to pay out, one to the Seminole Tribe of Florida and another to the city of Miramar.

The Seminole Tribe Grant was supposed to prevent power outages and enhance their grid resiliency. That's a critical mission in Florida, yet apparently not for the Department of Energy. Will you commit today to

unlocking the funding awarded to both the Seminole tribe and the city of Miramar and make sure that these other grants are unlocked as well, since Congress appropriated the funds, and they are appropriated under law.

Chris Wright

Of course, we look at we follow the law. We look at all of our projects and deploy funds that are legally obligated, but we look at them carefully. I hear your sort of smug dismissal of our concern for energy costs and energy reliability.

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.)

The Secretary's

Chris Wright

Entirely unjustified

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.)

Claiming my time, it's hundreds of millions of dollars which amount to small grants that make a big difference in the lives of the average Floridian, the average homeowner and organizations that want to lower their electric bills. If you you know the administration says you care about that, but actions, I'm a show me person, not a tell me person, withholding funding that ensures people can actually lower their bills. That's the opposite of what this funding was was intended for, and you are withholding it, and you I expect an answer and details as to when it's going to be released. Finally, Mr. Secretary we saw electricity prices go up in Florida even before the President's actions in the Middle East, but the Department of Energy cuts programs and funding that would invest in more affordable and reliable energy, and instead, it favors extending coal power plants well past their useful life span.

The reason that you, I'm sure, could not possibly provide me with real examples of clean, safe and reliable energy in the FY 27 budget request is because you're basically giving up and ceding this entire market to the Chinese. For decades, everything from the start of this administration to today has set up Americans, and especially Floridians, for a cost of living

crisis, and this budget request prolongs it. You can try to blame it on Iran or anything. Anyone else but this President and cabinet made calculated choices to inflict this high cost chaos on Americans because of the big, ugly law alone, electricity rates are projected to jump between nine and 18% in the next 10 years.

DOE canceled over $12 billion in Congressionally appropriated and lawfully obligated energy projects, which could have increased reliability and efficiency of our eroding grid. DOE yanked $30 million in Florida Power and Light grants, letting those costs get dumped directly on Floridians, and you've slow walk billions in nuclear projects and other energy projects that could be on their way to providing more affordable power sources to our grids. But somehow, as the Energy Department programs are slashed, the secretary's office and DOE headquarters are getting budget increases under your proposal, you've betrayed the people you swore to serve, and Mr. Secretary we can't afford it any longer. Congress must not be complete.

Sit in this administration's high cost chaos. Thank you for the indulgence. I yield back the balance of my time.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

At this time, I would like to recognize the distinguished Vice Chair of this subcommittee who's been infinitely helpful to me and ultimately getting a bill passed, bipartisan bill of 419 votes for energy and water in Fiscal 26. Mr. Cloud of Texas,

Rep. Michael Cloud (R-Texas)

Well, thank you, Chairman, and I appreciate your leadership of this committee and certainly your focus and getting us back to really what this committee should be focused on, making sure we have the energy resources and the water infrastructure in place to for industry and our people to thrive. Thank you to Secretary for the work that you're doing. I think it's extraordinary, the competency that you have brought the team that you've put together, and the direction that you put this nation on when it comes to energy, we were misguided for quite some time, and for one, I'm thankful I also sit on the Oversight committee and the DOGE subcommittee, and so we've been in all the waste, fraud and abuse hearings and and I find it

refreshing that this administration is taking a look at that with all the waste that we've seen. And I think it's also just kind of a folly for us to think that we are doing something great for the American people by having the taxpayers of tomorrow to pay for the electric bills and appliances of the taxpayers of today.

It just seems like a crazy notion. But I also want to thank you too for all the work you've done. You've been very active, traveling, not only every every lab, but you've also been in our in our district, in Corpus, Crist, and everyone there. Just really appreciated your thoughtfulness, the genuineness you brought to the conversations, and also having the president down there to see the great work that's been done in expanding the number one crude export port, the LNG, that's going out there that's helping our allies, and at the moment, there's a line of tankers lined outside in the Gulf of America, waiting to get into US ports so that we can continue to export energy.

So we're doing the long term things. Certainly appreciate that, and thank you for that. We do have a situation right now in Corpus where all the energy that's produced there and a lot of the refining that's being done, we're running out of water, and so that's been an issue. I know that you're aware of that as well.

Want to just remind you of that and what the Department of Energy can do to help with that. We're working with administration and other agencies to help with that as well, but I want to thank you for that. One. Of the, one of the big, important things, I think, in this context, is, is you and the President inherit a paradigm where China was outpacing us for world dominance in the next century, and the President's really turned the corner on that.

Now, key to that, we can look at AI we can look at the economic impacts, but those really come down to a race for energy production, and you you're leading that. And then connected to that is the importance of speed in getting that done. Could you speak to what you're doing to to enable us to stand up, projects, quicker, regulatory impact, all those kind of things. And then what's left for us to do that you need help with.

Chris Wright

Thank you for that. And it is, it is nice to hear that exposition of our goal, which is everything we do, is through this lens of will that increase the supply of energy and lower the price of energy. It's just a very simple lens, and we had, under the Biden administration, enormous amounts of money spent and in the Department of Energy, not one project, not one had a thing of this is what it'll do to reduce the price of energy. In fact, it wasn't a goal of theirs at all.

It was to spend money, ultimately, in almost every case, to make energy more expensive. So it's a little rich when I get criticized that we're doing everything to drive that was the goal of the Biden administration, and they succeeded, across the board, to drive every kind of energy up and everything possible to reduce the supply. So we're just have the exact opposite mentality. We want to grow American energy production of affordable, reliable, secure energy your district there in Corpus, is absolutely essential, not only for American energy production, but of course, it's our biggest gateway to ship crude oil abroad, a huge gateway to ship LNG abroad.

But not just an export terminal, of course, large manufacturing facilities. I visited a brand new one there, lithium processing facility that's there because that's a district empowered with energy, energy salary workers. And to your question of how you can help, one of the administration's goals is we got to build things in America again. And I rep. Present very much.

Representative Kaptur, wants to reindustrialize America. So do I? So do you? So do we?

We need to make it so you can build in America. Let me give one quick example. Was NEPA reform. NEPA was passed in the 1970s to make sure if you're going to build something big, you gave a little report of what impacts it might have on the environment.

It got weaponized into a way to stop anything from being built. So the Trump administration came in and said, That's nonsense. We're going to go back to the original meaning of the law. Every department, including ours, that issues NEPA opinions, just rewrote our procedures in line with the original law that was passed.

Just following the rule of law. Two thirds of the people that apply to us for NEPA shouldn't even apply to us, and the ones that do, it's just a very different process that had been imposed as a way to make it hard to build something. It's easy to stop something. It's hard to build something that's a stagnant society.

You and I and the Trump administration want us build things in America again. So we're doing everything we can in the administration, but I think if we can get serious permitting reform that addresses 401, C water permits as well, so that we can make it easy to build whatever businesses want to build. We're not going to tell people what to build, but make it easy, still responsible and careful. It's not like we're going to be reckless, but we have to be able to build things in America.

Again. I know you, and I share that desire. You've delivered it in your district, but we need the rest of the country to be able to build big projects like you've done. And I think, I think Congress has a critical role to play in that.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

I thank the Vice Chairman for his questions. Yes, at this time, I would like to recognize my distinguished friend and colleague from California, Mike Co-Chair, Mr. Secretary from the spent nuclear fuel caucus. As you know, I Chair eight caucuses. Mr. Levin has worked so hard with me on that joint endeavor.

So Mr. Levin, you recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Mike Levin (D-Calif.)

Well, I thank the Chairman. It's a great segue. Mr. Chairman and I thank you, Ms. Secretary for being here again. I do want to focus on spent nuclear fuel.

I represent a beautiful part of Southern California, including the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, and we've been heavily engaged in this for very long time. I'm so pleased to have my friend, Chairman Fleischmann, is a partner in this effort. Last year, when you came before the committee, we

discussed how DOE has racked up a lot, billions and billions of dollars of liabilities since the 90s, for the decades long failure to address the back end of the nuclear fuel cycle. And just an update from last year, the Fiscal 25 audit of the nuclear waste fund found that the total liability for spent fuel is $56.5 billion and in Fiscal 25 alone, taxpayers paid over $3 million per day.

That's extraordinary due to the lack of a workable solution. And by comparison, about 15 billion was spent on Yucca Mountain. So the often under appreciated reality is that the government will spend nearly four times as much money simply because it tried to select the location for nuclear waste without taking into account all the challenges of the yucca project and taking into account the communities where the waste would be stored. I'm glad that this administration is turning the page on this and focusing on developing projects collaboratively with states, so we can finally get this liability under control.

I know you know that DOE just put out an RFI inviting states to express interest in being a nuclear life cycle Innovation Campus. The deadline was April 1. And first question, Mr. Secretary is, what updates can you provide about DOE plans now that the RFI responses are in.

Chris Wright

So thank you for laying that problem out so nicely. Representative Levin, I know you're very knowledgeable in this area. I was just out in California last week, drove right past the San Onofre plant, and I know we share a desire. Hey, if that plant shut down and the fuel is sitting there, let's reprocess it.

Let's, let's, let's move forward and get it on out of there. So the short summary of the nuclear life cycle Innovation Campus process has just been tremendous interest. I think I will break news here. 28 states responded to our thing.

Are you interested in hosting a nuclear life cycle Innovation Campus? And again, as I think you said nicely, if you tell people, we're going to impose it on you, the citizens of Nevada, and it's going to be here, it's just a very different level of receptivity than the approach, as you pointed out, that we've taken, which is who's interested. Here's what would be involved. And one of the things that would be involved is permanent disposal of after

reprocessing of the material that's not usable and needs to be just more long time.

But you know, we would have fuel reprocessing there, fuel enrichment there, I suspect fuel fabrication, and probably reactors and manufacture, you know, things would build around these nuclear fuel. Innovation Campus, because the expertise would be there, the license would be there, the land would be there. So I'm very excited about that.

Rep. Mike Levin (D-Calif.)

Couple I am as well. A couple questions about it. One is, do you think we're going to need to amend the nuclear waste Policy Act to realize the vision of these campuses? Because if so, we better get working on it.

Chris Wright

And yeah, the short answer to that is, I don't know. I think it's it is possible that we will need to and as we get more clarity, we need to work with you and others in Congress about how to do that, and you, in particular,

Rep. Mike Levin (D-Calif.)

Given your expertise and knowledge in this area, we'd be eager to do that in a related to that is, how do we ensure that the campuses, to the extent they have storage, are allowing the government to finally meet the contractual obligations that we talked about a second ago, with a priority for the permanently shut down sites, not just San Onofre, but like San Onofre,

Chris Wright

Yes, absolutely, we you laid out that problem. It's growing. It's expanding. It's not going to go away if we just ignore it, I can say the same thing about the Iranian situation.

Just ignoring Iran does not end that problem. But the same is true with this nuclear waste problem, and if we want a nuclear future in our country, we simply have to fix this problem. But I believe it is fixable.

Rep. Mike Levin (D-Calif.)

We're very excited to work with you on it, and in speaking to a lot of experts about it, one of the things that you hear is that creating a single purpose organization is needed to manage spent fuel. You have a lot on your plate, and it's difficult to balance all the competing priorities. And then, of course, there's the cycles of politics and so forth. And I wanted to get your thoughts.

We have legislation. It's bipartisan with Representative Pfluger from Texas called the nuclear waste Administration Act, to create a sole purpose entity. I know we're almost out of time, but I'm curious your thoughts on DOE capacity to be able to manage this problem long term.

Chris Wright

I think it's a great question, and I think it's subject for future dialogue. We're trying to figure out who's interested. Where can we do it, but now to management and implement that, that that might be a very good idea. That might be a very good idea.

Rep. Mike Levin (D-Calif.)

We're always invited back to our area, and I hope the next time you're there and you don't just drive by, but you stop and we'll visit together. And I'm sure Southern California, Edison would love to see you as well, and I appreciate it.

Chris Wright

I would look forward to that in the dialogue with you when we're at San Onofre together.

Rep. Mike Levin (D-Calif.)

Thank you, Mr. Secretary now yield back. Thank you. Mr. Chairman.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. Mr. Levin, at this time, I'd like to acknowledge my friend and colleague from the great state of Florida, great naval aviator. Mr. Franklin.

Rep. Scott Franklin (R-Fla.)

Thank you. Chairman Fleischmann, thank you. Ranking Member Kaptur, thank you, Mr. Secretary I always enjoy hearing your enthusiasm and the results that you all are getting, and what can happen when we get out of the way and let people do things as they should be done. But I was especially thrilled to hear you make the comment earlier about gas prices, even though they're where we don't want them today.

Can you could you just repeat that again on where we are today compared to where they were under the previous administration?

Chris Wright

We agree we want gasoline prices back down where they were, but they're just over $4 a gallon today in the middle of solving a 47 year conflict, and they're a roughly $1 a gallon cheaper than they were four years ago in the middle of the Biden administration, with no interruption in flows of global oil and gas well.

Rep. Scott Franklin (R-Fla.)

Thank you for that. I was out in California a little while back now, about two years ago now, and rented a car, and I was kind of surprised that my only option available was an electric vehicle at the time, and they told me that if you want to get a combustion vehicle, you have to get here in the morning, because those are what the customers prefer, and they're all They're gone by the middle, by the middle of the day. But I was really shocked by how expensive gas is. And I'm from Florida, and I'm not accustomed to California prices.

Why is gas so expensive in California?

Chris Wright

I looked through a nice analysis done by a group within California, and by their estimate, 55% of the price of gasoline in California is a choice of politicians. They have the biggest gas tax. So that's a slice of it, but that's only 10% or so of it. They have these requirements on a special blend.

Only this blend can be made in California. That's tough when you want to build a product at scale, and you have only California marketplace for this very expensive blend. It started with the reasonable idea of, we're going to lower emissions and pollutions. I've been very proud through my lifetime.

I lived I grew up in Denver. Air quality in Denver has just improved massively as we've gone to cleaner burning technologies and engines, cleaner fuels and all that. So there's like a pot there's a reasonable trend there, but California has just gone way past the reasonableness and just made it so ruinous that they drove it to be expensive. Why are the refineries all leaving?

Rep. Scott Franklin (R-Fla.)

It's down to a couple of refineries. Is that correct? That's driving part of the problem.

Chris Wright

It is another part of two refinery closures this year, one that's already happened and one that's been announced and is soon to close. I'm actually very worried about that, because if you look at California, our greatest. Military assets, and thank you for your service to our country. The greatest concentration or number of military bases and military assets of any state in the country is in California.

California gets over 60% of its oil imported from overseas, and its number one supplier was Iraq through guess what, the Arabian Gulf and the straits.

Rep. Scott Franklin (R-Fla.)

Of course, of this conflict, the state of California is getting the majority of its oil from Iraq, from the Middle East, while we have oil that would be available here if they had different refining restraints,

Chris Wright

We are a net oil exporter. They prevented the building of pipelines that they've made themselves an energy island with the goal to make energy very expensive in California with the belief that that would speed the, you know, this magical energy transition that everyone talks about. The world has spent

$10 trillion $10 trillion on wind, solar and batteries over the last 20 years, and it's less than 3% of total global primary energy. I worked in solar energy.

I am all for new energy technologies, but it has been the greatest mal investment in human history. California, to think of your state. California had a little maybe 10% 15% more expensive electricity than Florida 20 years ago. Today, its electricity prices are more than double.

The state of Florida, and Florida produces 20% more electricity than California. They've just done everything wrong on energy policy. The Biden administration wanted to take that national and what was the net result in California? This very I lived in California for a long time, this very wealthy everything going for its state has the highest adjusted poverty rate of any state in the country.

You get energy policy wrong. You get everything wrong. Briefly, my colleague from Florida

Rep. Scott Franklin (R-Fla.)

Had mentioned that in her perception, your department is slow rolling, slow walking nuclear projects. Is that true? I met with folks from the nuclear industry this morning, and that did not jive with what they were sharing with me.

Chris Wright

No, I'm not even sure I yeah, I did hear that. And yeah, of course, that's that. That's we built two nuclear power plants in this country in the last several decades. We will have at least a dozen under construction during this administration.

And in fact, we have four or five test demo reactors under construction today. So together, we are going to get nuclear energy back rolling again and back advancing. But it takes common sense. It takes pro energy policies.

Rep. Scott Franklin (R-Fla.)

Facts are very inconvenient things at times, but thank you, Mr. Secretary and Chairman, I yield back.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you Representative Thank you, Mr. Franklin. At this time I'd like to recognize the Distinguished Chair of the Western caucus. Ms. Maloy for five minutes.

Rep. Celeste Maloy (R-Utah)

Thank you, Mr. Chair, Mr. Secretary I appreciate you being here today. I had three things I wanted to talk to you about, and the first one was permitting reform. My colleague Mr. Cloud did such a good job getting you to talk about that, I'm going to skip that one. So if we have time, I want to cover geothermal energy and uranium reserve.

So Geothermal energy is pretty important. In Utah, we have important geothermal research sites, and we a lot of it's in the West desert in my district, and I noticed in this budget that geothermal is included in base load, the base load power initiative, and move to the hydrocarbons and geothermal energy office. It looks like that is a good move where there's going to be some emphasis on geothermal energy, and the budget addresses some of the permitting concerns that I've had with geothermal. How is the move and the emphasis going to improve coordination with the land management land management agencies to make sure that we're doing geothermal resource development on public land.

Chris Wright

Great. Thank you for the question. And as you know, we share a love for geothermal energy. For me, it's been a career, long passion, and we moved it for that, one of the reasons you just said, But another reason as well, the technology to harness Geothermal energy is entirely powerful parallel to the technology to harness oil and gas, right?

You're drilling wells underground to extract resources, either molecules or heat. It's the same technologies, the same kind of permitting needs to be done. What's held geothermal back in this is almost all oil and gas drilling is on private lands and state lands. Why?

Because it is a nightmare to deal with the federal government, and the Biden administration did everything possible to stop the permitting of doing anything on federal land. So geothermal, so many of the resources are in the West, like your district, and in Nevada and California, a lot of those lands are federal lands, and we've got to make it so it's easier and simpler to make agreements so you can drill wells and harvest these absolutely immense geothermal resources, I would tell you, state Paul. Policies matter as well. I would say there's a reason that the really the main activities of geothermal, historically in the United States have been California and Nevada, but both of those have significant degradation of their of their regulatory environments.

So where is the money in geothermal going right now? Well, it's going in the state of Utah. It's federal lands, but it's got a reasonable state regulatory regime. There's a, as you know, there's a 400 megawatt commercial plant under construction in Utah today.

There's also our forge research sites that the future of geothermal is going to be bright, and I think you're going to be able to rightfully claim this next generation geothermal launched in your state, in your

Rep. Celeste Maloy (R-Utah)

District, great. We'll take it and the investments. How are you selecting the sites for the EGS Greenfield campaigns? Speaking of geothermal development, that's something we're very interested in in my state,

Chris Wright

Yes. So this is, you know, technical reasons. First is, you know, is the geothermal gradient there the drilling conditions viable? But of course, a lot of these will come from the commercial businesses that are prospecting.

And then we also do need a regulatory environment in which we can actually operate and do the research in a timely fashion, not overly burden it with delays or risks, of, Can we do the next step without for, yes, you can't from local regulatory authorities. So I don't know where they'll be. You know, I

won't be directly involved in that myself, but I think the commercial capital in geothermal is also there today. So in, you know, my view, in the US government is service company.

You know, the the industry is driving AI industry is driving energy production. We're just here to enable people as much as we can. And we do have a vibrant it's still nascent, but we have a vibrant geothermal industry. We want to help and support in any way we can.

The funding is mostly dedicated at commercial demonstration projects. We're new we're new we're trying new technologies now, which is the reason geothermal is growing, after not much growth for a while, and also also helping to fund to map resources, like they've got a big project being built right there. And boy, preliminary results look fantastic, but there's lots of places and and what are the temperature gradients here? What is The Fault in the subsurface geology look like?

So there we want to partner with commercial players to help fund exploration wells so we can better understand where are the best resources, how vast are our resources? And what next?

Rep. Celeste Maloy (R-Utah)

Okay, well, I heard the Chairman say we have two rounds. So I will save my nuclear questions for the next round. Thank you. I yield.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. Thank you. Ms. Maloy, at this time, I would like to recognize the gentleman, my friend from Indiana, Mr. Mrvan for five minutes.

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Secretary Thank you for being here, bringing your expertise and communicating with us. On March 23 you had issued an emergency order for two Indiana coal plants, nips, COE and Duke Energy. One of those nips, COE was in my district, and at that time, you made a statement that the Americans deserve all the power that they can get when the sun isn't shining and the wind isn't blowing. Your quote, unquote.

Ultimately, my district and my residents of Northwest Indiana are paying the highest energy rates in all of the country, and that specifically, a third party generated a news report saying it would cost nips Cole $100 million in order to put that coal plant back Online. My question to you is, because you just said, if you get energy policy wrong, you get everything wrong, please communicate to my residents in Northwest Indiana how forcing forcing a coal plant to stay open when a utility chose in 2019 to close it now the rate payers have to pay the infrastructure in order to make that useful in my district, as they are being crushed and devastated currently. And you had messed it, you had mentioned domestic manufacturing. Northwest Indiana is the top steel producing region in the country, those utility rates go into the cost of steel, which go into the cost of everything we produce.

Please explain why that forced emergency order is benefiting the people who are getting crushed by those policies.

Chris Wright

You bet so. So. First of all, thank thank you for the question. Representative Mr. In your region, northern miso, it is five alarm fire, quoting the reliability study that was done for are the lights going to stay on when advanced power demand hits there or not?

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

So I received an in the company by advanced power.

Chris Wright

So if I Ms. buck, I said advanced power, but if we don't, I mean, if we don't add additional power correct, the risk of blackouts is very high in the northern miso region. And so let me, let me give you a very nearby plant that

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

Was asking a specific question, how do you justify those rate increases and the 100 million dollar price tag to your emergency order.

Chris Wright

So the cost of blackouts is immeasurable. The cost of unreliable power is massive. And

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

Why have we not experienced that in the last 40 years that I've been alive?

Chris Wright

You haven't experienced blackouts,

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

Consistent blackouts, in mid in the Midwest and Northwest Indiana? To answer your question directly, no, so I don't, I don't get, I can't buy into

Chris Wright

Which, which is also why there's a complacency there that we're all good, the risk of blackouts.

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

If I could, they were going to replace it with natural gas. So explain to me how the natural gas policy, instead of using coal, would in would increase blackouts.

Chris Wright

So presume, presumably, the five, oh, sorry, my blood sugar is low right now. The the authorities we've used

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

Gatorade, go ahead and we'll reclaim my time. I'm being respectful. Obviously, take your time.

Chris Wright

Obviously a 202, C, authorities we've used have always been in dialogue with the utility there. I was criticized. The very first one we did was the Campbell plant in southwest Michigan. Same things.

It's expensive.

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

Don't answer. I've got a minute and 24

Chris Wright

I The 17 megawatts of coal. We've 17 gigawatts of coal. We've kept open. I don't know the details of every single one, but I can absolutely get them

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

Quick the other the other question that I have is the Federal Emergency Regulatory Commission authorized me so to impose a tariff that would allow nips co-to seek IRC approval to recover cost of complying with the federal orders through rate increases. A nips co-spokesperson said, this is a communication, so you ordered a tariff that would allow my rate payers to pay more based on your energy policy.

Chris Wright

No, it's to keep the grid reliable and ultimately to drive prices down. This is one person and one claim on most of the 202, C's we've done. They've been cooperative with utilities, some of them, like the Campbell plant, which we did a while ago. So I have plenty of data on all the same claims were made.

The claims were proved to be absolutely understand. Don't know the false here.

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

They might. I don't like concerned of Campbell. I'm Northwest Indiana, and the impact currently that you have, and as you stated, I don't believe that's the sea wrong. Everything is wrong, and it's a national security issue because of our steel industry.

So what I'm asking for in my time is to reconsider what or to consider the impact that your policies have on my rate payers. Going forward, you instituted a me so that allows the Indiana Leader Indiana utility Regulatory Commission, to impose a tariff, impose a tariff that would have the rate payers cover the cost of the infrastructure to increase the coal fired generating plant that they closed. That's a fact.

Chris Wright

The date, 28 states have have done renewable portfolio standards and have forced the closure of coal plants. They have 50% higher electricity prices on average, than the 22 states that didn't do that.

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

My state didn't do that.

Chris Wright

The data of forcing the closure of coal plants has been compelling across the country. If you my state and [CROSS TALK]

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

My Republican governance didn't do that,

Chris Wright

I need to dig into the details of that. There should have been a dialogue, and I suspect there was a dialogue between what your staff and that

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

I will look at it to relooking at that emergency order

Chris Wright

100%

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

To reverse it, if those costs are passed on to my rate,

Chris Wright

If it's not net beneficial to your rate payers in the region of

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

I'm telling you, it is not net beneficial to my rate payers, and please look into it.

Chris Wright

Absolutely. We'll look into it Absolutely.

Rep. Frank Mrvan (D-Ind.)

Thank you very much.

Chris Wright

No, thank you for raising it.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. At this time, I would like to recognize Ms. Lee from Nevada, who is my Co-Chair of the Nuclear Cleanup Caucus. We've worked together for years on this, and I thank you for your cooperation with the caucus. You're recognized for five minutes.

Rep. Susie Lee (D-Nev.)

Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Secretary for being here. My first question last year you acknowledged publicly, plainly and to the point that the people of Nevada are not in favor of Yucca Mountain, and thus President Trump and I do not support Yucca Mountain as a waste repository. So I just want to hear its music to my ears, a reaffirmation of that.

Chris Wright

Yes, none of those facts have changed. President Trump is not supportive Yucca Mountain, and I don't know if you missed our earlier dialogue, but we're searching around for who wants to host waste disposal sites. 28 states responded. We're going to have plenty of opportunities for waste disposal will go it will go into states that are leaning in want to do it.

Rep. Susie Lee (D-Nev.)

Great. Thank you. According to the US energy and. Information Administration, my state of Nevada leads the nation in solar power potential.

I just heard your response to the other gentleman down on the dais, so I understand where you stand on that, but it's now quite clear from both your budget requests as well as your work on the National Energy dominance council that you're choosing to prioritize other forms of energy, particularly from fossil fuels like oil and gas. We obviously have different points of view on that, but I'm hoping we can at least see eye to eye on this much when the Interior Department began insisting last year that every single solar and wind permit it process must now be personally approved by the Secretary burm, one of the leaders of the Senator Wright foundation for American innovation, who's 20 at 25th, annual gal in Washington featured you as a keynote Speaker Responded this way. They said, it's not good. There are lots of ways to encourage certain sources.

Deployment sitting on disfavored sources. Permits is among the worst. So I just wanted to Secretary debating on how and where to direct federal funding for different forms of energy. That's one thing.

It's certainly in your purview. But surely, I hope you can agree with me and the folks at FAI that weaponizing the permitting process itself against solar is a step too far.

Chris Wright

Yeah, I have been for the deployment of secure, reliable, affordable energy. Of I don't care what the source is. I don't have favorite sources and less favorite sources. I just do the math week, and it's usually some combination.

And of course, Nevada is a very favorable solar state. Yeah, we to see new solar development. Does solar have a future? Absolutely.

And should it be easier to permit and build things? I think I had that dialogue there. I agree with you entirely as well.

Rep. Susie Lee (D-Nev.)

You know, I completely agree with you. I always say we have so many energy needs in this country that it's an all of the above approach. But what we are seeing in Nevada in particular are solar projects and wind projects that have literally been stopped in their tracks from development waiting for the personal approval of the Secretary of the Interior, we've gotten some indication that maybe some are going to move forward, maybe some are not. But literally coming from a state with that potential, that has the highest per capita solar industry workforce in the country, it's really debilitating to our economy in Nevada, and I would say our governor, Joe Lombardo, has agreed with that and asked for some reprieve from this administration.

So I just asked if you join me in talking to Secretary Burgum to restore the type of permitting parity in our state that we're talking about to ensure some fair treatment for all forms of energy

Chris Wright

Absolutely. Again, I engage with Secretary Berg a lot, and I will on this issue as well.

Rep. Susie Lee (D-Nev.)

Great. Thank you. And then when you were here last year, or in May of 2025, I had asked you directly about maintaining support for the Department of Energy Solar Energy Technology Office, and you replied, Yes, I think you'll see continued work on solar at the Department of Energy. Yet weeks later, you released your budget seeking to zero out funding to the Solar Energy Technologies Office entirely, and this is something, again, that you're seeking in this year's budget.

So how, how do you square your commitment to this committee last year, that you would continue your work in this area, and then with your back to

back requests that Congress cut literally all funding to the very office that's responsible for doing the bulk of that work,

Chris Wright

I we will continue research in solar. I believe it is consistent with our budget requests. You know, we were, we are we have a lot of efforts at multiple national labs on pursuing solar technology going forward, and have no plans to change that.

Rep. Susie Lee (D-Nev.)

Okay, well, your budget request has it zeroed out again, so which, by the way, Congress has bipartisan rejected both years. So I hope that we can get an amendment adjustment to that.

Chris Wright

Yeah, we should continue to dialogue and work on that. But yeah, I'm proud of the work our labs are doing, and we've done in advancing solar technologies. And there's many applications for for solar, some exciting and new applications for solar as well.

Rep. Susie Lee (D-Nev.)

Great. Thank you. I yield.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. At this time, we'll begin a second round of questions. I am going to be exceedingly brief, Mr. Secretary because I want to make sure that my colleagues. Who perhaps didn't have an opportunity to ask some of the things, but I'm just going to talk briefly, or ask briefly, about plutonium pits.

Mr. Secretary you've talked about this in both your opening and have answered some questions. Can you kindly provide a realistic assessment of when, nd say, will achieve the 80 pits per year requirement, and what specific risks, such as technical workforce or infrastructure challenges could further delay that timeline, sir,

Chris Wright

Yeah. Thank you. Thank you for that Representative Fleischmann, the goal I have set since we've just begun pit production in our crew is yet get people trained, get the processes done like there's a thing in in Savannah they call a training center. Really, it's a prototype center.

It's getting these technologies better. Our goal is to get 100 pits produced cumulatively during this administration, and then get to that rate of 80 a year as soon as 2030 as possible. Now we'll still have just the Los Alamos facility, you know, through that time period, but it is to your point. It's critical that we ramp this up as quickly as possible so we can maintain and modernize our stockpile and our weapons.

But I think the people we have on the task and the passion they have for the mission and being business people with common sense, I think we'll see rapid improvement and continued escalation of our rate of pit throughput.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you, Mr. Secretary for that, and I will conclude my questions. And now, Ms. Kaptur, you're recognized to ask questions.

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much, and we don't want to wear you out, Mr. Secretary but this is our moment, so I wanted to ask a couple extra questions related to the grid, and I say this because we're broadcast, and maybe other people will hear what I say and send me advice. But there's a couple books that I think people who work in the energy field should should read. One is by a person who was quite criminal in my state and wrote a book before he took his own life, called What do I know?

I'm just a lobbyist, and it talks about what he did in Ohio's energy architecture. And Congressman Mr. Van has left. But all is not beautiful in the energy industry, and corruption happens in many cases. And I say to myself, what can we do to prevent this?

What can we do? So I suggest that book to people, and the author was Neil Clark, C, l, a, r, k, and it's, what do I know? I'm just a lobbyist. He was part of the nuclear corruption in Ohio, and so the systems we have aren't perfect.

Another book I want to recommend is power corrupts by Dick Munson. Richard Munson, Ms. o n. I recommend those books because whatever we do, we have to prevent what they talk about. And one of the odd things about energy in these prices, because in my region of the country of instrumentalities like PJM in New Jersey, we actually create monopolies.

They don't look like monopolies, but they end up having so much power that there's no competition. And so as lawmakers, we say to ourselves, what can we do to help our people have a better energy future, not just in terms of the technology, but the way it's delivered to them? I say this because, as with my dear friend from Nevada, Susie Lee, I happen to represent a place that invented the most important domestic solar manufacturer in the country. They couldn't get any capital where I come from, because we don't have those rich guys so much living in our area, those venture capitalists.

So a man, a great man, a Republican, had an idea. He was a successful businessman, and he worked with glass, and he made and his partner in the business developed a thermopane window for cars. He saved lives, including my own, by that Therma, Therma pane window, and something that happened to me many years ago, but for first solar to come out of Toledo, Ohio and Defiance, Ohio, a little town in southern Henry County, is amazing. And what they have done over the last several years, and I have watched it, they're not finished.

They're reinventing America, and this technology has a place. And this past week, I was going around to some of my agricultural communities that had been gerrymandered into my district, and I got a real present. And present was a Republican mayor,

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)

Way at the edge of Ohio, almost into Indiana. You push him into Indiana, he figured out. It, not through the Department of Energy, but the Department of Agriculture, how to provide power to his town, and he intends to do it. And what he did was he bought some land, and he ended up somehow

buying solar, a solar field, not huge, and he's not taking prime farmland, but he has a municipal power and he figured out a business plan for the technology, as well as how to provide power behind the wire to the people, to the people.

I'm not against shareholders, but oftentimes the people, as Congresswoman DeLauro, said they don't benefit. And I just thought, for that town, which probably doesn't have 5000 people, what he did was amazing, and they are now moving forward. He counted up tax credits and all this other stuff, and he goes, I'm going to cut my people's bills by half. And I said, Sir, I'm going to talk about you in Washington, DC.

So I'm doing that today in Pioneer Ohio, and they are pioneering, and that could happen in a lot of small towns that aren't connected to the big grid because he's not close to the big grid. So I just wanted to mention that, and that the systems we have don't always benefit the consumer. We need investors, but investors don't just vote for us. The people vote for us.

So we try to make power more affordable to them. And if you can do stuff behind the wire, we ought to do it. I'm not against that, even in cities, in cities where we have municipal powers, like Toledo, Ohio, which doesn't use its municipal power, which drives me nuts, and a neighborhood by neighborhood, we could cut bills if we were smarter, but we choose to live like it's 1946 it isn't. And so I just want to put in a word for innovation.

And Secretary Wright, you have been developing plans to lower household costs. I want you to see I want you to see what some of these folks are doing. The other technology I wanted to mention to you, and I'm having trouble getting anybody to pay attention to this and in my area, but Ms. Maloy, Congresswoman Maloy from Utah, she and I have a love of geothermal. We haven't talked about geothermal here today, and I want to direct your attention to it, because under what the major city I represent, our power lines, we've forgotten about for 100 years.

It's where the storm sewer water and the sewage runs through. And there's thermal power there too. It's not geophysical deep, deep wells 2000 feet down. It's just below our feet, and we are dumping into Lake Erie, the shallowest of the lakes, the equivalent of about 40,000 barrels of oil every year.

Lake Erie can't take it. She doesn't freeze over anymore, usually. So if we could collect that geothermal power, both in our water wastewater plants, which are the most expensive costs for any city, Cleaveland, Lorain, Toledo, Detroit, and move it to the surface, it stays 45 to 70 degrees all year long. And so I keep looking at these blood lines under the city and saying, there's a future there.

And I know you are intelligent enough, Mr. Secretary to understand that. So as these old cities have storm water and sewage lines collapse underground because of age. As we rebuild and we are, we can capture that power, and there's technology to do that, but we just don't do it. And there are experiments out there going on, and I think that's part of our future.

So I am for hydrocarbon, and I'm for carbohydrate, in whatever form I'm for thermal power, we shouldn't just dismiss the new technologies that people are developing. They will become more efficient, and I know you understand that, so I just wanted to put that on the record as we move forward. Thank you very much.

Chris Wright

Thank you so much. I'm all in a lower cost and energy innovation. Thank you.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you at this time. Mr. Newhouse.

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I always appreciate Ms. Kaptur's passion for many of the subjects. She is very interesting.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Great partner.

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

Mr. Secretary thanks for sticking around with us for a little bit this afternoon. Back to my first round of questions. I appreciated your response regarding the BPA and the need to hire a new administrator.

Just following up that on that, I wanted to emphasize that I think it's really important that consultation with regional stakeholders takes place, particularly this process for selecting a new administrator, as you mentioned, given the unique nature of BPA, it's truly a different kind of animal. It's absolutely crucial that the next person has a deep regional knowledge and expertise and truly a clear commitment to the unique mission of the. EPA, so I just wanted to get get that your response to that too, but no to

Chris Wright

Totally agree. Totally agree. Congressman Newhouse, this is a very important institution that's part of the government, but it's critical to the economy in that region. The value of wise management and willingness to lean in and move faster.

Would benefit the local communities massively, very important. Yeah, yeah.

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

Thank you. So something that I'm very passionate about, so Ms. Kaptur is a good segue to this. But as you know, Washington State generates more hydropower than any other state in the country, and we're very proud of that. About two thirds of our power comes from hydro.

The Lower Snake River. Dams are a crucial part of that, the infrastructure of the Snake River, and I appreciated you visiting there last December. I hope you enjoyed that as well. The dams provide flood risk mitigation, irrigation, recreation, transportation, and, of course, power benefits.

Generating that one dam that we went to generates enough energy to power the city of Seattle. So that's pretty amazing. Well, I think that may be the four dams that included on the Snake River. But while doing that, they provide world class fish passage, which we're very proud of that as well.

But despite of those facts, there are relentless efforts continuing to weaken and remove these dams, including the previous administration's efforts, their memorandum that committed get this 1 billion taxpayer dollars to weaken the dams, which thankfully this administration reversed last year. Still, though these efforts persist, and a recent court ruling requires increasing the spill over the dams, which will result in continuing to increase utility rates for customers and increase harm to fish through gas bubble poisoning. And so I just want to hear from you if you can reaffirm the administration's commitment to preserving these vital pieces of infrastructure and help ensure they're protected in future efforts to breach them.

Chris Wright

Oh, hard to overstate the importance of hydropower, because what's so great about hydropower the dream power you can turn up when you need it a lot of times you don't need it, and you can turn it down when you don't need it. I always say nuclear is great because it's rock steady. Doesn't matter what the weather is, it delivers rain or shine. But you need on top of that, you need dispatchable sources of power.

And the two biggest that can provide variable power, we have our natural gas and hydro. You know, when everyone comes home and there's peak demand time, we can flow more water through the dam and get that power, and then when everyone goes to bed at night, we can lower it back down so you can deliver power as you need it. That's hot, that very valuable power. And I think your example in these Lower Snake River dams is is back to that California question, why does California have expensive electricity?

I mean expensive electricity and expensive gasoline, expensive all these things because they've, in the name of the environment. They've done regulations that don't meaningfully change environmental outputs at all, but they took something that was originally intended for that and then just used it to weaponize to kill industries they don't like. And that's what's happening in in your district. And of these Lower Snake River dams that fish mitigation technology outstanding.

You know, is real problem. We want the salmon. We want the fish, the ladders, the things that are done, the new turbines that they can go right

through, like it's really you solved a problem that was a real problem, but that wasn't enough for the people that are fighting against these dams, because and it sort of exposes the lie. It's not really about the salmon for them, it's they don't like these big pieces of industrial infrastructure that somehow they think they want to, you know, go back to the pre industrial age.

They would never want to live in that pre industrial age, but they believe they want to go back that way, and they want to tear down infrastructure. I believe they represent a very small minority of the people, but they, too often get viewed as their environmentalist like, who doesn't want a clean environment? We all want a clean environment, but that's not real environmentalism. That's just people attacking infrastructure.

The story of the Snake River damage is fantastic. What they've done for the environmental mitigation and dealing with the fish. They are critical energy resources for our country and dumb, and we cannot and will not allow to see those dams come down. So thank you for raising that issue and pushing that battle and educating me and others about what's going on out there.

And I love that day at Cold Harbor. And I love hydropower even before I visited.

Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-Wash.)

There you go. Well. Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary Appreciate that. Mr. Chairman, I yield.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. Mr. Levin,

Rep. Mike Levin (D-Calif.)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Wright, I have a great deal of respect for you, and I want to give you an opportunity to directly respond to one of the questions that one of my colleagues asked Congresswoman DeLauro. She's not here right now, but she she did ask about something that was very troubling to me that I just wanted to get your direct response on and that's in December of last year, your lawyers filed a document in federal court and

wrote that, I quote The selection of which DOE grant termination decisions were included in the October 2025 notice. Tran was influenced by whether a grantee's address was located in a state that tends to elect and or has recently elected Democratic candidates.

End quote. This was all written about in a December 2025 Washington Post article titled Trump administration admits to targeting blue states for Energy grant cuts. I ask unanimous consent to enter this article on the record, Mr. Chairman, and again, that's not political opponents talking. That was your own lawyers in federal court.

So my first question is simple. I think you told us today that politics played no role. Your lawyers told a federal judge it did. How do you account for the discrepancy?

Chris Wright

Actually, they're not inconsistent. What I've said is the evaluation of all the projects did not take into account politics. They looked at these projects on their merits, and that piece you just read does not contradict that. It said the announcements of the projects, the selection, not the evaluation, not the choices that were made, the timing of the announcement of some of the evaluations, if I could, that does not reflect at all on the evaluations that were done.

Rep. Mike Levin (D-Calif.)

Your lawyers went further. They didn't deny the politics. So they argued that, and I quote, consideration of partisan politics is constitutionally permissible. They actually said that that's the quote.

They tried to justify it. A federal judge disagreed. What I want you to answer is that every single grant terminated in October 2025 was in a state that voted against the president. Not one red state project was touched.

How do you account for that?

Chris Wright

I think in that wording you saw the announcement, which is a timing question, not a decision question.

Rep. Mike Levin (D-Calif.)

The exact words from your lawyers were, consideration of partisan politics is constitutionally permissible. And also quote the selection of which DOE grant termination decisions were included, was influenced by whether a grantees address was located in a state that tends to elect Andr is recently elected Democratic candidates. So you won't

Chris Wright

A selection of the decisions to be announced, not the decisions which decision which were non-political, were announced at that point in time. Didn't want to go here,

Rep. Mike Levin (D-Calif.)

Because I do have tremendous respect. Tremendous respect for you. I want to have a good working relationship. I genuinely do.

OMB, Director Vought announced these cuts on social media as counts canceling and I quote green new scam funding to fuel the less climate agenda. End Quote before DOE sent a single termination notice, the president said the day before, and I am quoting that the shutdown was an opportunity to do things that are bad for Democrats and irreversible. Are you telling this committee that was all a coincidence,

Chris Wright

That timing we those decisions were made before then they were made on merits and unrelated to politics, what you saw was which decisions may have been announced on that day. That was not a decision made by the Department of Energy. It did not impact whether we voted thumbs up or thumbs down on any projects.

Rep. Mike Levin (D-Calif.)

So I don't think we're going to agree on this one, but let me ask you this, the Inspector General has opened a formal audit of these terminations. Will you commit right now to full cooperation with that audit? Absolutely, okay, that's good. So I think you said also that you would be open to reconsidering some of the grant terminations.

Is that a correct?

Chris Wright

Oh, absolutely. We've had many dialogs with many different parties in all different independent

Rep. Mike Levin (D-Calif.)

Of geography, and I know the business plan is very important and the private investment is very important. I want to bring your attention again to the arches hydrogen hub in my state. I know sometimes my state can be a punching bag, but nonetheless, I want you to really consider the project for its merit. It foregoes over $10 billion in primarily private sector investments, threatens over 200,000 new jobs and undermines a program that that was slated to save nearly $3 billion per year in healthcare costs.

So I know that California, the arches program, they want to work collaboratively with you. They genuinely do to see what areas of agreement there are, and focus on advancing those. But there has been really. No reciprocal effort made by DOE.

So will you commit to engage in good faith with them, not on the basis of the politics, but on the basis of the merits in the business plan in the next, let's say, 6090, days?

Chris Wright

Absolutely. The problem there was they set cost goals for what would make it economically viable, and then they didn't show a pathway to even get remotely close to the cost goals. So if you spend a lot of money, but at the end, you have nothing that's going anywhere, that's just a bad investment. But if we misunderstood the math, or they've got different math or different stuff, absolutely open for that dialogue,

Rep. Mike Levin (D-Calif.)

Well, I'm sure they're listening to this, and they will take that back, and I'm sure they would be encouraged to have a conversation with you about it. So I appreciate very much your answers, and I yield back. Mr. Chairman,

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. Mr. Cloud.

Rep. Michael Cloud (R-Texas)

Thank you, Chairman. I happen to be looking at a list here of projects that were canceled, and I can tell you few of them were in Texas, not a blue state, and I'll say this too, some of them needed to be canceled. You know, I think of where we're headed from an energy standpoint. And just a few years ago, I remember to talking to people in the energy sector, and it was kind of a debate over how we were going to who was going to get the biggest piece of the pie, which energy type, and now, just a few years later, with the need for us to beat China at AI and the energy that that's going to require among everything else we need for energy, the question is, how much pie can we make?

And so when I think of things like carbon capture that was extremely expensive on the back of the federal taxpayer, not only not producing energy at all, even though people would try to define that as an energy project, not producing energy at all, and then is a tremendous demand on energy, actually, in communities, raising The price for the consumer and all those different kind of things. I'm thankful that we're reevaluating some of the decisions of the last administration. I do want to ask you about this. You've been focused on base power.

A bunch of different ways to produce energy, but particularly a focus on base power, and wanted to ask you about the energy dominance finance program and some of the tools you're using to stand up, particularly nuclear, whatever this, I think we're realizing, again, from where we were just a few years ago to now, that nuclear has got to be a part of this equation if we're going to compete and but because this is new, in a sense, we haven't done

this in decades, banks are not likely to fund it, or having a difficult time. You know, standing up to fund these Do you have any additional author? Do you need any additional authorizations or funding to to the EDF to ensure you can provide fund, provide financing for more nuclear reactors, including first of a kind, commercial scale deployments, and if not, when do you expect to announce loans for projects utilizing the SMR technologies that you've been working on and supporting so

Chris Wright

I hope in the not too distant future, we have been in dialogs with many players for large reactors, for small modular reactors, for large fleets of small modular reactors. So you were very keen to use the energy dominance financing office for that. It was retooled the structure and the and the funding restrictions on the office in the bill last summer and the reconciliation bill, right, but we came out with a large lending authority, which is fantastic. We can do big things, but a relatively small credit subsidy is sort of the technical term, which really just means we need to lend to people that are going to pay us back.

And I feel very good about that. I'm using American taxpayer money, not not me, not us. We're using all of America's money. We should invest that with a road to lowering their energy costs, and with their expectation they will get that money back.

I think in the nuclear projects we're going to have, we're going to be in good stead there, because the data center developers are likely going to be large players in the equity. Meaning, if you know, the reactor takes $10 billion to build, we're going to get $2 billion or so invested in equity from giant hyper scale companies with huge balance sheets, and then our debt will come behind them, which means if it loses money, if it loses $2 billion all of that is the equity guys. The debt is protected behind the equity investors. So I think we're going to have very credit worthy, you know, investment grade credits as our equity partners in the nuclear space.

Some will be large utilities. Really, what's probably going to happen is we're going to have equity. Equity from hyperscalers. We're going to build reactors that will ultimately be sold on to utilities, but they couldn't fund them during construction, and then we'll get paid back.

The other people get their equity money back, and you can recycle that money back into developing even more reactors. But I do think it's going to be a very helpful tool. And after we build 10 or 12 of these reactors, I think the commercial lenders will be there, and you won't need the EDF anymore to relaunch the nuclear industry. I think it's going to be a helpful partner, but I think we can do it in a responsible way for the American taxpayers, and in a way that will drive more more dispatchable, reliable power and lower rates ultimately.

Rep. Michael Cloud (R-Texas)

And do you have a sense on timeline, on how that how that will proceed over the next

Chris Wright

As soon as you know, there's many parties we're working with to get deals together, I suspect you will, you know, you'll see, you should see announcements in the next 12 months about projects that are moving forward, rough estimate that are going ahead. I'm excited about that. And again, another one of these things I just got to add in there, when we reviewed all of the existing loan portfolio, about $100 billion when we arrived, you know, that was committed in the Biden administration. A lot of those things out there, we could not find one project that had in its plan lowering the cost of energy, electricity, or any other form of energy, it was simply not even on the table for consideration they were about lower greenhouse gas emissions or just gambles on something.

And people were happy to gamble with taxpayer money, because if it didn't work, and a lot of those loans, unfortunately are going to default, and you know, we don't want to do that. We're going to spend the American taxpayer money like it's our own because it is.

Rep. Michael Cloud (R-Texas)

Yeah, thank you.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. Ms. Lee,

Rep. Susie Lee (D-Nev.)

Thank you, Mr. Secretary The Nevada National Security site, NNSS is a critical component of our country's nuclear stockpile stewardship and readiness program. It's because of the work at NNSS that we do not have to conduct conduct explosive nuclear tests to ensure that our weapons will work as well as they're designed to do. That work is more important now than ever, given the current environment, there are several key projects at NNSS that need a sustained funding to stay on track. The u1 a complex enhancements project, the Zeus test bed facility infrastructure project and the construction of a new access shaft.

These projects are designed to expand our experimental capabilities in support of our nuclear stockpile assessment programs and to ensure continued access to underground test facilities, and any disruption in funding for these projects risk delays that could compromise the stockpile stewardship mission. Adding to my concern is the uncertainty surrounding the funding provided to the NNSA weapons activities through the One Big Beautiful Bill. For months, it was unclear how those funds would be distributed across the nuclear security enterprise, and I understand that allocations have shifted significantly in recent weeks, and then could shift again, funding effectively ended up about $217 million less than what was in the President's budget request last year. So that kind of uncertainty makes it incredibly difficult for sites like NNSS to plan and execute this critical work.

And I just wanted to know if you could clarify how the One Big Beautiful Bill funds are being allocated across the enterprise and when, whether any of those funds are going to be flowing to these projects in Nevada.

Chris Wright

Yeah, so ongoing dialogs across the team in NNSA about what to prioritize, what can only be funded this way, what could maybe be funded through another mechanism, or funds out of another bucket. So it is a complicated process for sure about how these monies are allocated. I should have started by saying your intro comments about how important this site is to understand our stockpile, to understand new weapons designs, is absolutely

true. We have it's an enormous advantage in this country that we have so much data from actual explosions that we can use with mathematical models to now predict the physics of what would happen with all these different designs, with very well calibrated, awesome models that work enabled us to be in the strong position we are today, and continued testing of non-yield explosions, non-nuclear yield explosions in those sites is critical.

As well. Look, I visited the location, the sites and the workers there. It is a key part of our NNSA arsenal. It will remain so there is no plans or no dialogue to say, ah, that's not as important anymore.

Let's, let's shrink that and move over here. There is, there is none of that happening. This is a critical asset for the whole enterprise,

Rep. Susie Lee (D-Nev.)

Great. So I completely agree with you, and so I just hope that we can work together and I can get your commitment that whether it's through the Big Beautiful Bill allocations fiscal year 27 or either future budget formulations that these projects do not fall behind,

Chris Wright

Let's dig into the details of those with with my NSA team and you on that I share your concern and your passion for that.

Rep. Susie Lee (D-Nev.)

Thank you. Do I have time? Got a middle I just, I, you know, being on the Colorado River, and given the extreme drought that occurred this winter, Lake Powell's speaking of hydropower, Lake Powell's hydropower generation is at risk as the water level may it's predicted by the Bureau of Reclamation may before by December of 2026 fall to what we call dead poll threatening power supplies for millions of Americans across seven states, and obviously then force reliance on more expensive forms of energy. So just want to bring that.

I know it's on your radar, but it is a serious, serious risk, especially in light of what happened this winter with respect to snow fall in the Rockies.

Chris Wright

I agree. And that whole Colorado River Compact from over a century ago. In fact, I wrote a little thing about this showing the flow data over the entire recorded history, and then a proxy going back in time. You know, they set allocations after a sort of a wetter than normal period.

And then, I think at that time, it was supplying water to about 6 million people, and now in that same region, we have 60 million people. The demand for water is way higher, and that friction between the states on allocation, we got to, we got to make some progress. There we walk. Water is like energy.

You can't do anything without it.

Rep. Susie Lee (D-Nev.)

Thank you. Thank you.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. Ms. Lee, we're going to recognize Ms. Maloy for her final questions, and then Mr. Secretary Ms. Kaptur, is one quick question, and then we will adjourn. Ms. Maloy,

Rep. Celeste Maloy (R-Utah)

Thank you as a fellow Representative from a Colorado River Basin state. Thank you for your attention to what's happening with our potential dearth of water to produce hydro energy, but I want to talk about the uranium reserve. So Utah is a home to the white Mesa mill in blinding Utah. It is the only fully licensed and operating conventional uranium mill in the United States.

We also have several uranium mining projects bless you at varying stages of development, and Congress funded the strategic uranium reserve in 2020 to support domestic procurement, but funding has been inconsistent, and I would just like to hear your thoughts on what role you see these assets like

the white Mesa mill in Utah And our uranium mining sites playing in rebuilding the secure End to End Domestic nuclear fuel cycle to meet the needs we have, both for energy production and also for national security.

Chris Wright

So very important is the short answer I've met in my first few months in office with a number of the uranium miners in the United States and unfortunately, former uranium miners that we want to become again, uranium miners in the United States, that whole supply chain in our nuclear industry just fell apart. The Cold War ended. Russia flooded the world as with enriched uranium from their bombs and weapon program blended it down. We all decided, well, just buy it somewhere else.

And and we just lost the capacity to enrich uranium in this country, to mill uranium in this country, to to fabricate fuel in this country, you know, and then we stopped building nuclear power plants. We still got to power our existing plants, and we do that with imports and some foreign company investments in our own country. And I think you see a strong commitment from this administration that we need to reestablish the American supply chain of new of the nuclear industry, but including mining. We get a mine uranium in our country again.

We got to mill uranium in our country again. I strongly believe we will the demand signal of new reactors being built, new expansions going on. Think of even our weapons program, right? We need.

We need, oh, my God, I'm blanking on the term. We need, uranium that's mined here, enriched here, and all that out. Ah, another, another brain cramp.

Rep. Celeste Maloy (R-Utah)

All been in the hot seat for a long time.

Chris Wright

Yeah? Well, not that long. Yeah. See, I just perform poorly today, but, um, but it is important.

It is important. Utah has a great legacy in in the in the uranium industry. It's gone through a few rough decades. I think we're going to see better times going forward.

And we need to keep these facilities and these capabilities alive. And in our country, five years from now, I think they're going to be booming.

Rep. Celeste Maloy (R-Utah)

Well, I would love to work with you over the next five years, as we get to that boom, to make sure we're doing it in a way that's good for the United States of America and also good for Utah and sustainable over time. Let's do that. Thank you so much for the question. Thank you.

I yield.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you. Ms. Maloy and Ms. Kaptur. One final question.

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just wanted to say thank you to the secretary for mentioning in your testimony, testimony fusion power and the potential of fusion. I know it's a little bit down the road, but nonetheless, thank you for acknowledging that and the support you provided for it.

The second issue I just wanted to touch on was AI and to give you a sense of the grass roots I have never seen, and maybe Ohio is the only state, but I don't think so. Michigan and so forth, the public opposition that is arising, it's just it's spontaneous combustion coming up from the grass roots. We must as a country, find a way to communicate with people at the local level about what the implications of this, what they are, and I don't think we're doing a very good job. So, for example, township trustees come up to me.

They have responsibility, they have no money, and they see big swaths of land, 100, 100 acres that's taken, and some companies coming in, and they're told, Well, go to the Poco in Ohio. Well, they've never been to the Poco before, and the opposition toward it rises and rises and rises. I would urge you to somehow across the administration, to think about some type of

mechanism you could create working with HUD. For example, I represent a city of 280,000 people.

And we have a lot of old industrial properties. They don't have the money to clear them, to knock them down. That's land that's already there. And we have a way we can work in every city across this country to provide space.

But it's happening so fast. They're going out to the country, and the farmers are turning against AI because they see farm ground being taken, and they don't like it, believe me. So this is happening in many places, and I just wanted to put it on your radar. We have to find means to help people imagine a power package that doesn't overpower the grid, maybe somehow we have to bring a Power Package with whatever is going in.

But the zoning of where this should go, these companies are so wealthy, they just come in and buy the ground and it goes beyond the local people. It's not treating the American people right. In my opinion, they have a right to be treated fairly and to understand what's going to happen in their area. Then it causes prices of energy to go up in water, and they're helpless.

So there's something wrong with the way the private market is operating. Is so hungry for this, you know that part is good, the hunger, but they're not meeting the ground in the right way. And what could happen is a backlash in this country. I see it.

You should see the signs. There's more political signs against AI in our region than for candidates in the upcoming races. Now that's pretty significant. So I think the states need help.

If you were to say to me, trust Ohio's poco, let others make the judgment on that. But we need help. This is sophisticated stuff, and the building trades are all for building everything wherever they can. And I want them to and I want them to good, earn good wages, but I don't know what backlash there's going to be, but I'm telling you, it's coming, and we don't want that.

We want a smooth transition to new technology. Maybe across the administration, maybe HUD could help by helping some of our mayors to clear land where there's already grid and there's already space, and there's not going to be a lot of cars that come to these power sites. But just talk to

some of your staff when they go home to wherever they're, wherever they come from, what's happening out in the countryside is not good.

Chris Wright

So Representative Kaptur, if I may, you represent you. You bring an opportunity brownfield development. Take existing things to build. We announced one of those in Portsmouth, Ohio a while ago to use an old industrial facility to build a huge data center and power production.

So I agree with you, there's a real opportunity to do to bring to build in brownfields. And you also point out a risk, and it is a very real and unfolding risk today is the opposite. Transition to AI is growing, particularly across rural America. The administration worked from the start, and we rolled out just a few weeks ago the rate payer protection pledge, so that the developers of data centers need to bring money up front into communities.

They need to sign deals that will stop the rise of power prices, that will invest in the local communities for training and jobs like I think the real deals are wins. They're big wins, but we don't talk about them very well. We don't advertise them. And I'm seeing the same thing.

You're seeing that the country as a whole is going very negative on AI and this is a risk, because it will be a loss to America if we stop this development and this investments and this improvement, but if we don't market it better, and we don't better, and we don't communicate it better, we're at risk. We need to change the public perception of AI. Thank you for raising that. I agree.

Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Ohio)

Thank you.

Rep. Chuck Fleischmann (R-Tenn.)

Thank you, and I thank the Ranking Member. Once again, I'd like to thank Secretary Wright for being here today. Thank you for your thoughtful and complete answers. So appreciate your coming before this Appropriation Subcommittee, and for all you and your wonderful staff and department are doing for our country, a few housekeeping Master's, I would ask that you

please ensure that the hearing record questions for the record and any supporting information requested by the subcommittee are delivered please, in final form to us no later than four weeks from the time that you receive them.

Members who have additional questions for the record will have until the close of business next Wednesday to provide them to the subcommittee. And with that, the subcommittee stands adjourned. [END]