

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS
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Opening Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Hearing on “Budget and Spending Concerns at DOE”
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations
April 18, 2012

I welcome today’s hearing on the DOE budget. No one, Republican or Democrat, should be in favor of wasteful federal spending. If we can identify ways that the Department can save money without jeopardizing its missions, we all should support those changes.

At the same time, we also need to recognize that the Department of Energy has a vital mission in developing new clean energy technologies. Congress should be doing more to support these initiatives. Our economic future depends on building the clean energy industries of tomorrow.

Unfortunately, the Republican budget that the House passed last month is stuck in a fossil fuel past. It would all but wipe out DOE’s clean energy initiatives.

The Democratic Committee staff this morning released a supplemental memo that analyzes the impact of the Republican budget on clean energy programs. I’d like to ask that this be made part of the record.

The findings of this memo reveal exactly how much damage the Republican budget would do to the DOE’s mission of developing clean and renewable energy technology. It slashes discretionary spending for energy programs by over 50% next year. While the Republican budget avoids many of the specifics we need to tally up the damage, it is clear that it targets key clean energy initiatives.

It repeals funding for the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Program - a program that helps the auto industry to improve the fuel efficiency of cars and develop next-generation advanced batteries for electric cars. It halts DOE loan guarantee programs that are creating jobs and funding innovative renewable energy projects like wind farms and geothermal power facilities. It eliminates funding the Western Area Power Administration is using to build transmission lines to deliver renewable energy to the places it is needed— like a 725 mile transmission line to deliver wind energy from Wyoming to the Southwest.

And while the Republican budget calls for massive cuts to important clean energy programs, it also protects massive tax breaks for oil companies. Under the Republican budget, oil companies earning record profits would receive \$40 billion dollars worth of tax breaks over the next decade.

American families are struggling at the pump and the Republican solution is to give oil companies earning billions of dollars more tax breaks. Think about those priorities. While the rest of the world is rushing to develop clean energy sources that protect the environment and the health of our children, we are continuing to squander taxpayer money on the oil industry.

Our climate pays the price as well. There is a strong scientific consensus that climate change is real and is happening now. But my Republican colleagues continue to ignore and deny this reality, and passed a budget that would only make the problem worse.

Mr. Chairman, at hearings last month, Secretary Chu made the compelling economic case for investment in renewable energy. But the Republican budget sets our country back decades in the effort to develop clean, renewable energy technologies that will create millions of jobs and power the economy of the future. The Republican vision represents a huge mistake.

Our energy future can't depend on outmoded thinking or technologies.