

March 24, 2010

House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development Holds Hearing on President Obama's Fiscal 2011 Budget Request for the Energy Department

[LIST OF PANEL MEMBERS AND WITNESSES](#)

PASTOR:

The committee will come to order.

Good afternoon, Dr. Chu. Good afternoon, everyone.

We are -- we have before us today Secretary of Energy Dr. Steven Chu. He is here to present the administration's fiscal year 2011 budget request for the Department of Energy.

Mr. Secretary, congratulations on your first year, and we look forward to your insights into this budget request.

As the nation continues to discuss the merits and structure of a comprehensive energy policy for the 21st century, the Department of Energy must take a leadership role in the transformation of our energy sector. I firmly believe and support that the principle that innovation, technology, and research and development should be at the very core of our national effort to this end.

I do believe we can -- that we can invent and invest our way out of our energy problems, and that government should help lead the way. This is not to say government is the answer. This is to say government's role must be structured to complement the role of the private sector.

As the debate over the policies and initiatives for smarter energy consumption and a more robust energy mix continues, the ultimate outcome of that discussion will be irrelevant if strong leadership and fundamental management reforms are not forthcoming at the Department of Energy.

This committee has been front and center in pushing the department toward more robust management of its portfolio, including project management and cost estimating.

Mr. Secretary, we hope you will take a strong leadership role in transforming these practices at the department to ensure that the taxpayers get the most of their hard-earned money.

I would note that over 60 percent of the department's funding is associated with maintaining and securing the nuclear stockpile and cleanup associated with the legacy of radioactive waste. While I understand that the Nuclear Posture Review is further delayed, this committee continues to insist on a comprehensive and enduring policy foundation for our nuclear arsenal.

I am hopeful that this administration will answer the questions posed by the subcommittee in 2007, placing the requirements of its weapons complex in the context of our future military requirements.

This subcommittee continues to have concerns about the president's decision regarding Yucca Mountain, given the absence of a repository will affect not only our energy portfolio for the future, but also the cleanup of radioactive waste at DOE sites and disposal of spent fuel from military operations.

Several of these sites are represented by members on this subcommittee, so please rest assured that we intend to be involved in decisions affecting the disposal of spent nuclear fuel and defense waste.

Mr. Secretary, I look forward to hearing from you today about the fiscal year 2011 budget request and how you will address the energy and natural -- national security challenges we face and how your management plans will ensure efficient planning and execution.

I expect we will be working together to address the challenges ahead, but I also, again, remind you that cooperation and respect is a two-way street. We will continue to have the dialogue. There will be differences and there will be concurrences.

And so, we look forward to working with you in a cooperative effort to ensure the best budget result.

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

I also ask that, if members have additional questions they should submit for the record -- they will submit for the record, that they please do so to this subcommittee by 5:00 p.m. this afternoon.

And, with these opening comments, I would like to yield to our ranking member.

FRELINGHUYSEN:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Dr. Chu, welcome back to the committee. I've served on this committee for most of my time in Congress, and I don't think I've ever had less contact with an energy secretary or with your department.

Even correspondence I've sent you on Yucca Mountain and on your proposed re-programming of funds goes answered (sic) until the day before you're scheduled to appear before

us. While the timing may be coincidental, it sets a tone that you only need to respond to the committee to forestall criticism.

In the future, I hope we can build a more constructive, positive relationship. I know you're busy, but that lack of contacts makes me wonder whether you understand our role as appropriators.

As an example, I note your op-ed you penned in yesterday's Wall Street Journal, where you wrote, and I quote, "And with the new authority granted by the president's 2011 budget request, the Department of Energy will be able to support between six and nine new reactors," end of quotation marks.

Mr. Secretary, let me be perfectly clear. There'll be no authority granted unless Congress grants it. The dollars we appropriate are not yours, nor the president's, but belong to the people we represent. This committee, by law, will determine how they're spent.

Moving on to the matter before us, I'm generally pleased by the priorities in your 2011 request, especially the defense portion, renewables, and the nuclear energy portfolio, which signals support for near-term expansion of this critical clean power source.

Mr. Secretary, I'm also gratified to see the requests for \$36 billion in additional loan guarantee authority for nuclear power plants.

But I ask why the administration has failed to include \$360 million that the committee must set aside to cover this new authority. That omission, plus an ill-considered repetition of a proposal which was rejected by Congress last year to reopen contribution that the uranium enrichment (inaudible), decontamination fund, leaves this subcommittee with a \$560 million hole. By any gauge, that's a challenge that will be difficult to fill.

While I'm generally supportive of your priorities, I regret that the request is nearly 7 percent more than last year. Mr. Secretary, more than 92 percent of the Stimulus Act funding you were given last year has yet to be spent. And I know there's a difference between spending and obligating it. And those are borrowed dollars that have raised our federal debt to unprecedented levels.

Frankly, my constituents want to see some restraint in the size of government, not continued growth. They want private sector jobs, not public sector ones.

Mr. Chairman, this may be the only time we have you before us. I must request your indulgence to ask, once again, about Yucca Mountain.

Mr. Secretary, this subcommittee and the public are owed answers on recent developments surrounding that license application. Last year's House-Senate conference provided clear, unambiguous language to the department to continue the license application through this fiscal year.

And last year, the full House voted overwhelmingly not to eliminate it -- eliminate funding for it. Yet the department has filed to withdraw the license application "with prejudice," in quotation marks.

If this is approved, no future administration will be able to re- file the license application, even if it is found by the blue ribbon commission or others that Yucca Mountain -- the Yucca Mountain repository is truly the best option for long-term waste storage.

This decision could quite possibly expose U.S. taxpayers to billions of dollars in liabilities, and it cedes our international leadership role in the scientific and technical development of a deep geological nuclear waste repository to countries like Sweden and Switzerland, that are actively working for it on a specific site.

This administration has unilaterally halted a program I believe established on sound science, and has done so with absolutely zero consultation with Congress.

And I continue to be disturbed by the department's, quote, "game plan," as you articulated in a recent conversation with the Wall Street Journal's managing editor, Robert Thomson.

Let me read one of your quotations. And I quote: "While it's fair to say that the whole history of Yucca Mountain was more political than scientific, but also, very truthfully, I can say that given what we know today the repository looks less and less good. So now we're in a situation where it can't move forward.

"When Yucca Mountain was being established in the early 1980s, the idea was that the nuclear industry was going to tail off. Now, because of climate change, we do want to restart the nuclear industry. Because of that, the statutory limit of Yucca Mountain would have been used up in the next couple of decades. So we need to take a fresh look at everything." All of that within quotation marks.

Perhaps I come from the old school, in which \$9 billion is actually a lot of money. But I don't understand your rationale. We've known for years that a second repository was going to be needed, but that shouldn't make us throw away billions of taxpayer and (inaudible) dollars dedicated to building the first one.

And we've known for years that other geological formations might be even better for a repository, but the consensus scientific opinion -- scientific opinion -- was that Yucca Mountain was a good choice.

From where I'm sitting, the scientific consensus hasn't changed one bit, nor has the expressed will of Congress or this subcommittee. It's politics that's changed. And that is leading the administration to throw away the work of decades, adding to the cynicism that politics trumps sound science.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

PASTOR:

Mr. Secretary?

CHU:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Frelinghuysen.

Let me -- let me go through my prepared remarks as quick as I can and get to the question-and-answer period.

So I want to discuss the budget request from the Department of Energy. President Obama has stated that the nation that leads the world in creating new energy and clean sources will be the nation that leads in the 21st economy, and this is primarily what this budget is about.

I couldn't agree more with that. It's going to create new clean energy jobs, expand frontiers of science, reduce nuclear dangers and help curb the carbon pollution that threatens our planet.

The budget request includes an investment of \$2.4 billion in energy efficiency and renewable energy. And through this budget we're going to increase research, demonstration and the deployment of wind, solar, geothermal energies, make buildings and homes more efficient, develop energy-efficient vehicles, pursue carbon capture and sequestration.

Our budget request also includes an additional \$36 billion in loan guarantee authority for the nuclear power sector, as well as \$495 million for nuclear energy research and development.

The Department of Energy is also focused on the safety and security of our people. The department is requesting a significant increase, more than \$550 million in new funding for the NNSA Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation Program to help meet the president's goals of securing all vulnerable nuclear materials around the world in four years.

We'll also ensure the safety, security and effectiveness of our nuclear stockpile. With the \$7 billion in funds we've requested, we can upgrade our infrastructure that's been allowed to decay in the past decade, support the work of our national labs, and recruit the skilled workforce we'll need.

The budget also protects public health and safety by supporting commitments to cleaning up the environmental legacy of the nation's nuclear weapon program. I've included a detailed description of these and other key programs in my prepared statement for the record, but during this time today I want to focus on one of my key priorities in the department: the integrated set of research and development initiatives that are critical to accelerating clean energy breakthroughs, the energy innovation hubs, Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy and the Energy Frontier Research Centers.

I believe it will take all three of these efforts to discover and commercialize the energy breakthroughs we'll need. So let me describe each of them briefly.

The Energy Frontier Research Centers are -- constitute small groups of researchers focused on breakthroughs in science. They're mostly university-led teams working to solve specific scientific problems that are blocking clean energy development. For example, one EFRC is working to improve our scientific understanding of the chemical reactions in battery electrodes.

When you think of the FRCs, think about a collaborative team of scientists such as Watson and Crick who gave us the structure of DNA and the protein (inaudible) in that same research unit that founded molecular biology. As one of the colleagues have said, the partnership of Watson and Crick represented a marvelous resonance between two minds, and a state where one plus one didn't equal two, it equaled more like 10.

So, the department proposes expanding the Energy Frontier Research Centers to capture emerging opportunities and new materials and basic research for energy needs. ARPA-E, the Advanced Research Project Agency-Energy, funds small groups focused on breakthroughs in technology. This is primarily in the private sector.

These are using highly entrepreneurial funding models to support specific technologies where short-term R&D efforts could lead to game-changing results. For example, the ARPA-E project is developing a technology to capture emissions from power plants that were inspired by the way the human body captures and disposes of carbon dioxide.

When you think of ARPA-E, think of the visionary risk-takers launching new technologies and startup companies out of their garages, of Bill Hewlett and David Packard pioneering a new audio oscillator that ended up jump-starting entire new industries as what's called Silicon Valley. The F.Y. '11 budget includes \$300 million for ARPA-E.

The energy innovation hubs are different than these other two. They are large, multidisciplinary, highly collaborative teams of scientists and engineers working over a longer period of time to achieve specific high-priority goals. For example, one of the hubs focus is on cost-effective ways to create transportation fuels directly from sunlight. They are led by top researchers with the knowledge, resources and authority to nimbly guide the efforts, seizing new opportunities or closing off unproductive lines of research.

When you think of the hub, think of large mission-oriented research efforts such as the Manhattan Project at Los Alamos, or the type of projects that AT&T Bell Laboratories which discovered the transistor developed. The department will continue funding three innovation hubs introduced in F.Y. '10, but in addition we're proposing a new hub to dramatically improve batteries and energy storage.

We don't know where the big energy breakthroughs are going to come from, but we do know what has worked before. To reach our energy goals, we must take a portfolio approach to R&D, pursuing several research strategies that have proven to be successful in the past.

But I want to be clear this is not a kitchen sink approach. This is coordinate, prioritize with a full view of where we're going to have to put these pieces together. Discovering new energy solutions will take smart collaborators pushing the frontiers of science. It will take risk-takers working out of their garages. It will take robust research teams on a mission, and it will take a Department of Energy to bring together the different parts of this research strategy to accelerate the innovation process.

That is my unwavering commitment to you. I'm looking forward to working with you as we pursue new solutions to the energy problem and create a generation of clean energy jobs. And I'll be happy to take questions at this time.

PASTOR:

I've been told that there's a possibility that in the very near future, I guess within five to 15 minutes, there may be a call to a vote, so we'll start with some questions and then we'll leave to go vote and then come back to continue.

I have a request, and if there's an objection, obviously, I won't, but Congressman Wamp is the ranking member on MilCon that's going to start a hearing here. He'd like to ask one question before he leaves.

Mr. Wamp?

WAMP:

Well, thank you for your courtesy, and it's timely because Secretary Chu just spent almost two full days in Oak Ridge and saw several aspects of what is done there. I'm grateful for your time and enjoyed being there with you. So did our governor and Congressman Lincoln Davis. And he can follow-up on this when I go to the other hearing, but I wanted to ask you a couple of questions.

One is, I know the public knew of most of what you did there, but some of what you did there the public doesn't know and shouldn't know. But is there anything that you saw or learned in Oak Ridge that in any way opened your incredibly educated eyes to anything?

I mean, was there anything that you were struck by after seeing a really excellent multipurpose site where the national security missions are certainly grateful for the budget request on nonproliferation activities to meet this administration's priorities, yet clearly what's done there will assist in a major way the world being a safer place after we provided basically the buildup for a long period of time.

We're certainly involved in meeting whatever the NPR recommends and we're grateful for that. Clearly in the science arena, you all have made a big commitment just in the last 15 months in certain areas that the Oak Ridge National Laboratory is meeting.

I know you gave a long talk on climate change, and while I don't agree with a lot of the objectives, it was certainly a talk that scientists at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory really keyed into and agree with, obviously, a lot of what you said.

But anyway, I was also fascinated at dinner the other night for us to break into a conversation about the research programs ARPA and E-ARPA and the things that your priorities are. And I want you to go into that today so that the subcommittee and the professional staff can fully understand what your priorities are and why you need what you need from the subcommittee.

CHU:

Thank you, Congressman. Very quickly, I visited two facilities, Y-12, which is part of the NNSA laboratory complex, and I visited Oak Ridge National Laboratory. I was struck by the fact that in both sites there were an amazing number of Americans working there -- very dedicated workforce on two different aspects.

In Y-12, I saw a new place that was being used to consolidate their nuclear materials in a much safer way so that you can reduce the footprint at Oak Ridge. You can actually reduce the expenditures because of the -- just the guarding of this material was becoming exorbitantly expensive.

It is a place where we also do a lot of the refurbishment and dismantlement of our nuclear weapons. This is a very important part of our continuing national security and again an amazing work force. In Oak Ridge National Laboratory, it's one of the leading national laboratories in the Office of Science.

As you know, we extended that another five years because of its outstanding management and operation. It is a center for a wide range of things. It is the leader in the world in advanced computing and the use of advanced computing to do all sorts of things that will play an integral role in the economic prosperity of the United States.

I did give a long talk. I perhaps spent a quarter of my time, a fifth of my time on climate change, only to say that contrary to some people's beliefs, the evidence of human-caused climate change is mounting, not decreasing.

But I spent most of my time -- I hope I spent most of my time talking about the economic opportunities the United States has in becoming a leader in this evolution to sustainable energy. That in -- we have a chance -- and again because of the great innovation machine in the research universities, in the national laboratories, in the private sector especially, if when guided very gently, that great innovation machine can develop leading technologies that could be used at home, but equally important can be exported around the world.

And so in my talk there, I was focusing on having the United States seize those opportunities for their prosperity tomorrow and the years ahead and decades ahead.

WAMP:

ARPA-E?

CHU:

ARPA-E, we talked about -- this is again -- it's a new way of funding where the funding will be very short-term -- two years, three years maximum. It's a push where the -- the program directors in ARPA-E are now being proactive, just like in DARPA, and they're saying what areas in the technology sector are ripe for a little push to really break open things.

We're asking -- we're funding things that we believe can be home runs. So, we're not going for singles. Well, if you swing for home runs, you will strike out, but if you hit a home run and a grand slam, then it really gives us a very different choice. It creates new industries. And so a lot of the things we're funding in ARPA-E are of that ilk.

Very short term, specific, you know, it's sort of pre-funding that we hope in two or three years the private sector will pick up.

WAMP:

Is the stimulus money for ARPA-E actually spent -- obligated under Mr. Frelinghuysen's question? Why don't you tell us that?

CHU:

Well, OK. So, in terms of the stimulus money for ARPA-E, these are -- these -- the first round of proposals have gone out. The second one -- in terms of all the stimulus money in appropriations in answer to that question, we were given \$36.7 billion. Right now we've obligated \$26 billion. We'll go to \$30 billion by June. By F.Y. '10, we will have obligated all of it.

We have made selections -- essentially a large fraction of the selections have already been done, under contract about \$12 billion. The costing is slower, in part because what happens is in the costing of many of these areas, in particular some of the weatherization grants, the state energy programs, the EECBG -- in some of these programs, you give them some to states and we try to help the states set up -- and in many of these things, they too have to go out for proposals.

And so what we are doing is we are helping the states. There's some excellent states who are costing these at a very good clip. Ohio is a shining example of one such state. But -- and there are other states that are less experienced in this, but we are trying to help them. This is not -- my

intent is not to do anything (inaudible). I think we're -- we're partnering with the states. We're trying to get that money out.

But the -- in general I think we are on our schedule to cost the money as rapidly as we can. We actually had an obligation schedule and a costing schedule. Some of the programs got off, but the ramp-up is now going very quickly. And so I think we -- it is being well-used and it will be out there and costed in due -- in short time.

PASTOR:

Thank you, Mr. Wamp.

Mr. Secretary, as I understand now -- things have changed again. Now the vote will probably be -- oh, we are going to have votes at 2:30. OK.

Well, we've changed again. The issue is that sometime this afternoon, the supplemental is going to be on the floor, and once that is on the floor we will have to adjourn.

CHU:

I understand.

PASTOR:

And so what I'm going to try to do is give the members at least five minutes to ask the question. And so we're going to try to accommodate as many members as we can, not knowing what time the supplemental comes on and we have to adjourn.

The reason I'm going to ask these questions is that obviously you know I'm kind of learning on the job and I'm not the brightest guy in town, and so -- but, I've seen where assistant secretaries and other people from the department have come forward, and usually we lead off with, "you had a requirement" -- I'll give you an example of yesterday.

We had Assistant Secretary Miller. And in the legislation that was passed last year, it said that a report on the hubs will be delivered no later than 60 days after enactment, so about three months. And so I asked the assistant secretary that sometime in January that was due. And at least I think his expression to me he was a little bit surprised to know that was something that was required.

But he also had another commitment to the committee, the report -- the strategic report that was due also around January, and he apologized profusely. He was hoping to have it here, but no plan in hand.

In 2007, I remember on the subcommittee we asked NNSA for nuclear strategy for the 21st century, and they said it was coming. Then they said, "Well, no, we may have the nuclear posture review that was promised last November. That's coming." And so, it's the series of "it's coming, have faith in us -- or have faith.

Well, as I told you at the very beginning, my intent, and I think a lot of the members of the subcommittee was to look at these reports and see what the future was, where we were going, so that we can make decisions as we plan the 2011 budget now.

So it's a matter for us to be able to get the backup, the information so we can make decisions that are rational. And now I think we have a bigger mandate since our administration has told us that we have to be fiscally responsible and make sure that the monies are invested in the right way.

And so I would ask you and recommend highly to you that you may want to talk to some of your assistant secretaries, undersecretaries and the various personnel that you have, that it's very important that they fulfill their congressional -- that they fulfill their obligation in bringing these reports to us. The quicker the better I think, so that we can go on with our work in looking at your 2011 budget and making decisions that are based on data that they have provided to us.

CHU:

Well, I don't know if it's any small comfort. I'll add my apologies. I knew about that obligation and we slipped, and I will go back and make sure we can get that back to you. We have slipped on that. It is not for -- there's been a lot of effort in this. You know, these hubs are new. It's getting a very clear idea. It's very important to start these in the right way, and so there has been a lot of effort -- directly, personally my effort, because it was something I take very seriously.

And so in the startups of the hubs, it wasn't clear -- just as it probably was not clear for a little while. I would hope to clarify that as best as possible to you and the other members of the committee and the staff of this committee.

It was also not clear in the Department of Energy for a little while and we had to go round and round and round, and I too essentially developed with my team exactly what we mean. So, but we will take our responsibilities and our duties to you and this committee very seriously.

And also, just as -- the apology part that certainly I misspoke in the Wall Street Journal article about...

(CROSSTALK)

(LAUGHTER)

CHU:

... in The Wall Street Journal article about, you know, our budget request. It is a request. But I think the ranking member will hopefully support me on that request, but it is a request. Even I know that, and so that -- I apologize. That slipped. I didn't catch it.

PASTOR:

It was a misrepresentation. I guess I'm the reporter.

CHU:

No, no, whatever I wrote.

PASTOR:

Well, I'm trying to get you a way out of this.

As I understand now -- as I understand now, Rodney?

As I understand now that the supplemental will be brought up after this series of votes. So we're going to clarify it so as we leave, we will know where we are at.

So, Rodney?

ALEXANDER:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I don't need to reiterate my unhappiness. I'm just wondering -- I have a few questions, and you may want to bring some reinforcements up to join you. I'd like to clear up some matters relative to the legal authority for some of your actions relative to Yucca.

Mr. Secretary, Section 304 of the Nuclear Waste Policy Act establishes the office of Survey and Radioactive and Waste Management, which will be headed by a director. Your budget request materials very clearly state you are terminating the office.

Are you requesting an amendment to the Nuclear Waste Policy Act?

CHU:

No. This was something we discussed -- I discussed with general council in my office as to how to interpret that and we respectfully believe that it is in the authority of the Department of Energy that we can reallocate...

ALEXANDER:

The office, you're aware, was established by statute, so it would take us -- I don't think you can do it unilaterally.

CHU:

Well, all I can say is I'm not a legal expert in this matter, but I did talk with our General Council at some length.

ALEXANDER:

I raise the issue. I mean, this is why some basic communication despite the political dynamic and the determination of the White House's iron clad, not going to move on this, you do have to have some statutory authority to do it. On March 10th, the Department sent a notice of expected separation to more than 150 DOE employees who may lose their jobs as a result of the Administration's Yucca Mountain policy.

This puts them on notice that workforce restructuring opportunities may be available to them. It's a kind way to put it, including jobs in other parts of the DOE. You're aware of this notice?

CHU:

Yes.

ALEXANDER:

Yes, of course. And are you aware of Section 302 of our Fiscal Year 2010 Act, or maybe somebody behind you is?

CHU:

Yes. Yes. We are seeking to use the funds -- to reprogram the funds so that -- given the president's administration's intent to close down Yucca Mountain, that given the expense of it we thought it would be prudent to begin and to use those funds -- reprogram those funds.

ALEXANDER:

Let me just read from that section. "None of the funds appropriated by this Act may be used to develop or implement a workforce restructuring plan that covers employees of the Department of Energy."

I've asked the lawyers at the GAO to give me their preliminary opinion on this decision, but I'm sort of looking for yours.

You're using Fiscal Year 2010 funds to restructure the Office of Civilian Radio Active Waste Management and what's your authority for doing it?

CHU:

Again, this is...

ALEXANDER:

I don't want to get into (inaudible) authority. I wonder what your legal authority is.

CHU:

Absolutely, and so on matters of legal authority, I looked to the General Council on this, and so we'd be happy to discuss it. Again, this is something where we -- I was under the impression and advised that we, of course, needed to inform this committee and Congress to do this, but again I was told it was within our capability.

ALEXANDER:

Some think that this provision only applies to the Defense Nuclear facilities because of its original links to Section 3161 of the Fiscal Year 1993 Defense Authorization Bill, but a defense nuclear facility is defined in the act, "Includes a nuclear waste storage or disposal facility that is under the control or jurisdiction of the secretary."

That sounds pretty much like Yucca Mountain. I assume you would agree. I think we need some clarity here. I know that determination has been made, but quite honestly I don't think you have the statutory authority to do it.

CHU:

Well, so I think this will require a longer discussion on you and I and our staffs on that and so -- because I can't...

ALEXANDER:

We will have that. I -- I welcome that. I think, quite honestly, public opinion is behind having it. It certainly relates to the blue ribbon commission that the chairman and I have talked about as that always ought to be on the table. I know the word is out it's been eliminated, but in reality that's not our read there, nor is it in the statute which I cited there.

CHU:

OK, I'm misunderstanding what you were saying because I was on an earlier comment. If the discussion is what the blue ribbon commission will be...

ALEXANDER:

That's one discussion, but I think to some extent if you move unilaterally you're actually violating Section 3161 of that 1993 Defense Authorization Act. And obviously we're going to see what we can do to get a little more clarity, and I welcome the discussion with you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

PASTOR:

(OFF-MIKE)

(UNKNOWN)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you for the work you're doing. Your department has had a legacy of several decades I believe, of unfilled potential, and I believe you're changing that. You're changing it in your management style and you're changing with your expertise and you're changing it with new investments, so thank you for that.

I know we're going to go to votes fairly soon, so I want -- I'll ask a very quick question and I'm going to dispense with the wind up and get right to the pitch. You and I have had conversations in the past about PACE bonds, Property Assessed Clean Energy bonds. You recognize that energy efficiency is a low hanging fruit to displace oil almost immediately.

You also recognize that the best way of achieving that energy efficiency is to allow people to get a faster return on investment. And one good way of doing that is to incentivize local governments to help finance those energy efficiency retrofits and deployments of renewable energy, whether it's an individual homeowner, or a major commercial property developer.

My question is -- I've asked this to Secretary Johnson, Secretary Zoi, I'm going to pose it to you and then ask if you and I can follow up. I believe the big game changer in this would simply be for the Department of Energy to apply its existing loan guarantee authorities to guarantee the local financing, to guarantee that when a municipality goes into the bond market to finance those retrofits that the full faith and credit of the United States Government is behind those financings.

We passed that language in the climate change bill in the House. I'm not sure you need an act of Congress to do that. I believe you can just -- you have the authority to simply say that some of your loan guarantee will apply to PACE bonds and other local financing.

So I'm asking you today to give that deeper consideration. I know that there are some theories in the department, but when can we have a conversation so that we can get to a decision by you on applying some of that loan guarantee authority to PACE bonds and other local financing mechanisms.

CHU:

Well, Congressman -- well, first, yes. I am a big fan of the PACE mechanism of funding up-front cash so homeowners can -- and even businesses can do retrofits that will prevent out of pocket expenses and actually save them money on a month to month basis. We are looking at this -- I'm being assaulted now with lots of legal questions and in some sense I should have my brother -- my younger brother the lawyer here.

But, in any case, I think we -- I've asked that we -- within our authority can we do this or not, and so this is turning in -- but I do agree that it is something we are very enthusiastic about and we invite you over to the Department of Energy and we can look and talk about that.

(UNKNOWN)

I'd like to have that conversation, and also just some certainty from you as to when the lawyers are going to give you an answer. I know it's been churning, but if we can do a little less churning and a little more producing it would be good. So, if you can prioritize that, I'd appreciate it and look forward to following up with you personally.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

PASTOR:

(OFF-MIKE)

(UNKNOWN)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for being here, Mr. Secretary. I appreciate it very much. Let me say first of all, I appreciate the administration's response to the nuclear energy budget in this budget that you proposed. I've seen many administrations come through that say they support nuclear energy and when the budget comes in it doesn't seem to do that.

This is really the first one I've seen that actually looks like that they're serious about nuclear energy, so I thank you for that. It's very important. But I do want to -- I told you I wasn't going to ask you anything about Yucca Mountain and I'm not, but I will make a statement and you can respond if you want to, but you don't have to.

You know, the white elephant sitting in the room back there -- we all know why it's closing. Nobody wants to say it, but we all know why it's closing. It has nothing to do with science or anything else, it's just a reality and I get it. It's going to close. But, I do have one complaint. You're seeking to withdraw the license application. I understand why you're doing that.

What I don't understand is why you're trying to seek -- why you're seeking to withdraw it with prejudice, which means that some future administration, some future Congress, when we're all gone can't decide, "You know those guys back in 2000, they knew what they were doing and this maybe is a good place to put it."

Now, the blue ribbon commission is not a citing commission. It's a process commission that -- to look at how we're going to deal with this stuff. But we all agree that at some point and time we're going to need a geological repository. You said that last year.

So, at some point and time, we're going to have to have some citing commission, some future administration, some future Congress, whoever, is going to have to have a citing commission.

Why not leave everything on the table instead of trying to tie the hands -- and in fact, this doesn't really even tie the hands. What it does is just make it more expensive because it just means you cannot reapply for the same license application. They could say we're going to expand Yucca Mountain. It's a different license application and we can apply for it.

All that withdrawing with prejudice says is that you're going to have to go through some additional steps. Maybe you're reducing the size of it, maybe expanding the size of it, change it somehow so it's a different license. That just means it adds cost to it. So I just don't understand why you would withdraw it with prejudice.

Having said that, I think what Ranking Member Frelinghuysen was saying was the ability of the of -- of the Department of Energy to discontinue the OCRWM Division, a division that was created by Congress, by statute is questionable.

And so we probably need some legal clarification, or at least some discussions with you on that.

Having said all that, will you guarantee me that it is the intent of the Department of Energy that they will meet the milestones in the Governor's agreement to the state of Idaho, and does that include having all the SNF removed from the state of Idaho by the year 2035?

CHU:

So, in answer to your last question, the answer is a very simple yes. We intend to fulfill our obligation. The reason we are withdrawing with prejudice is so that we give a very clear statement that this administration does not intend to proceed and so we move on with it. And, so...

(UNKNOWN)

Are they going to blow it up?

I mean, it's a big hole in the ground. We have abandoned mines that we try to take care of. Are they going to put cement over it?

Are they going to...

CHU:

None of the above.

(UNKNOWN)

I think it's a pretty clear indication that you've made. I don't think you have to withdraw it with prejudice. I mean, you said, "We ain't going to pursue it," so -- but, anyway, one other question: loan guarantees. I appreciate the fact that you put out the \$8 billion in loan guarantees, the conditional loan guarantees for the new reactors. It's a huge step forward.

As you know, front end enrichment facilities, there are proposed loan guarantees that are currently before the Department of Energy. I talked with the Undersecretary of the Loan Guarantee Program. There have been applications there that have been going on for about 18 months. His goal is to try to reduce that to four to six months.

Any idea when we are going to see any type of results from the loan guarantee on the front end enrichment, and I also applaud your decision yesterday with the \$45 million that you've done

at USEC at Oak Ridge and stuff. I think that's the right step. I don't think these companies have to be in competition with one another. The fact is we need all technologies.

CHU:

Yes. I agree with that, and what we are doing is we are proceeding on the two front end loan guarantee applications. They're on different time tables. One is not holding up the other. We're trying to work and finalize arrangements so that we can finance both of them. I think that's proceeding forward. And so, in fact, if -- what we hope is that in the restart of the nuclear industry we will need both.

(UNKNOWN)

Yes. Could you tell me how the credit subsidies are determined in the loan guarantee program?

CHU:

A very, very complicated issue. It depends on the financial stability, the assets of the company, what, in case of default, what the federal government can put liens on. These are complex determinations on the bond rating if you will the company, many other things, the assets. Then we determine a range, and then through discussions through OMB, a credit subsidy is finally determined.

(UNKNOWN)

Thank you.

PASTOR:

(OFF-MIKE)

(UNKNOWN)

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

And, Secretary, thank you very much for being here today. My father always told me, if you want to hear a sermon, be sure you have a preacher that's preaching it. And if you want someone to operate your farm, be sure you get a farmer. Now I use those two analogies for a reason.

If you want someone to be the head of the agency for energy research and development, get a scientist and someone who's been there, done that and knows what they're doing. I'm pleased, one of the few very first times; we have a Nobel laureate and someone who gets it, and someone who's willing to question, even, what may be going on in the laboratories, if necessary, and to challenge and be sure that those individuals we have tasks with, or certain responsibilities, are doing that responsibility.

I've been impressed with your leadership of this department, and I'm sure that in the future we will be even more impressed as you continue to work to be sure that America's energy needs and our national security needs will be met.

I hear a lot about climate change being discussed, and in my district -- it's a very rural district, and there will be folks who will challenge me on all cases generally, "You know climate change is not occurring. The Earth just changes in certain cycles."

And I say, "So you believe it's a cyclical process?" "Yep."

"So you think we go through cycles on the Earth and so therefore the temperatures change," and they say, "Yeah."

"So you believe in climate change?" "Oh, yeah. But I don't believe (inaudible) has anything to do with it."

Then you say, well, if we're talking about an energy policy, this is a climate change, then you're pretty happy that we're talking about removing our -- removing the (inaudible) that foreign countries have on us that are supplying us with energy. And so, should we call this an energy policy?

So, should we shift the title of what we're doing because everyone wants cheaper energy?

My wife and I built a house many years ago when we put a split unit electric system in it. The air handler was in the basement and the outside unit was outside. Then the natural gas came and we put a natural gas system in. Then that ran out because we were using the whales in the area. I'm getting to energy efficiency. And then, when the natural gas -- we put another propane.

And then, eventually, about two years ago, we put in a high- efficiency electric unit that has saved us 65 percent or better of the energy we consumed the last 30 years in that house on an average basis, if you look at the kilowatts that we use per month, by using the highly efficient.

So, for me, I think there are many, many parts of the puzzle, when we talk about becoming energy -- closer to energy independent and becoming more and more economically secure and having more national security as we look at the energy policy that reaches there.

So, from where I'm sitting, I'm looking at someone like you that has the experience, has the knowledge. Where do you see our country being a decade from today, as it relates to all of the proposals we're seeing in the area of energy?

And what do you expect our labs to be able to do to make us more energy independent and less dependent on the nations who may not be our friends?

CHU:

Well, I agree with you. I think the lowest-hanging fruit is to promote energy efficiency. Show homeowners, show individuals, show companies that -- how to decrease their energy usage so they save money and create incentives and really show this can be done.

I do this personally in every home -- well, there's one that was built very recently, so I didn't have to do much, but in every other home that was older, I personally, with my own hands, weatherized these homes.

I put insulation in and I got huge energy savings immediately and a more comfortable home. And so I think that's one of the things, in 10 years' time, we will -- I hope we will then have piloted successfully and deploy at scale energy efficiency programs that homeowners can immediately start saving money using finance mechanisms so there's no out-of-pocket money, but on a monthly basis they are saving money.

I think we want to do the same in industries and factories, commercial buildings. These are some of the things we want to push as hard as possible. We also want to develop and push the continuation of cleaner forms of energy to develop cleaner ways of using fossil fuel as we develop renewable energy. So, I see within 10 years a growth of wind. I see solar inflatable tanks dropping at least by a factor of two, hopefully a factor of three in price.

Factor four magic will occur, but then without subsidy everyone will put on their roof. We don't know whether -- but the pro -- you know, I see batteries that will have twice the energy density of today's batteries so we can have plug in hybrids on a massive scale in 10 years. As we begin to massively deploy these -- again saving more money because you can plug your car in.

If we had batteries that are compact and could last 15 years that were at the target price we want -- you're driving your car, and the first 40, 50 miles which, maybe, factors three times less cost and decreasing our oil dependency. So, in 10 years time, what I see in the battery technology, I think this will happen.

(UNKNOWN)

As I see the tripling of potential loan guarantees for those reactors and nuclear energy, is that also an area -- is that also an area where you see expanding?

CHU:

Yes, very much so. I think it's the intent of the administration to -- and this is why we are requesting \$36 billion in additional loan guarantee authority so that we can show that the new generation, the Generation III-plus reactors can be built on time and on budget, that it makes good economic sense. And then the private sector financial companies will say, "Look this makes good economic sense. It's a good way to base flow clean energy," and they will take over. And that's the strategy.

PASTOR:

(OFF-MIKE)

CALVERT:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary. It's always great to see a fellow Californian out here today. As you know, not all solutions -- you're talking about insulation, other solutions for energy are high tech. Some solutions are relatively low tech and one of those is a number of companies that are coming out with new roofing granules, so-called "cool roofs."

You've talked about them. President Obama's talked about them. As a matter of fact, 3M Corporation just happens to be in my Congressional district, but make these roofing granules and a low tech solution that works. It brings down substantially your energy costs.

And since you both have talked about it, do you continue to be a strong proponent of those technologies, encourage homeowners to install Cool Roofs whenever possible?

CHU:

Yes. I think, whenever -- yes. The answer's yes.

CALVERT:

OK, well you know, in this Home Star legislation that's now being considered here in Congress that provides a so-called Silver Star rebate to consumers who make energy efficient upgrades such as insulation and other things you've talked about, which I think is great.

But, I think that other products also need to be taken a look at. I know you can't have an open ended process on this, but certainly these ideas on -- that has substantial energy savings I think you should look at. Would you agree that it makes sense to add cool roofing to the list of products eligible for Silver Star rebates?

CHU:

Yes.

CALVERT:

Well, good. That's good to have that on the record. That was easy. Let's go to something a little more...

CHU:

How's that for a short answer?

(CROSSTALK)

CALVERT:

Yes, you know, that's always an easy one. I understand that you sent notification on February 17th to -- the Department intends to reprogram \$115 million of the remaining F.Y. '10 funds to close Yucca Mountain, which was not at all what those funds were intended for. And I should note at this point the committee has not approved or denied that reprogramming, so I would expect that no action has yet been taken. Is that correct?

CHU:

That is correct. We're waiting on the ruling from the NRC.

CALVERT:

Well, do you intend to reprogram those funds without Congressional approval?

CHU:

Well, that again goes back to this leading question that we need to...

CALVERT:

We'd like the answer no.

(LAUGHTER)

CHU:

But we will work on clarifying the legal question.

CALVERT:

So you don't know? You may...

CHU:

Well -- and I hear a difference of opinion between Ranking Member Frelinghuysen and our lawyers and so we need to work that out.

CALVERT:

So the answer is you may make a determination to reprogram those funds without Congressional approval? Is that a...

CHU:

Well, let's say before we do anything we're going to have a discussion with this Committee.

CALVERT:

OK. Well, that's fair enough. I'll just leave it at that. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

PASTOR:

(OFF-MIKE)

(UNKNOWN)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary, for being here. My question relates to Yucca Mountain also. It's my understanding that you intend to continue to collect the nuclear waste fees, but there's no Yucca Mountain anymore and we don't know what we're going to do.

And we still have to spend the money to take care of this stuff while it's on site. And my -- what are we going to do? Why are we even collecting those fees? Why don't we even think about returning them if we don't know what we're going to do with them?

CHU:

And this is one of the charges of the blue ribbon commission to first determine the appropriate fee collection. As they make recommendations to me, the President and Congress on how to move forward with better solutions.

So, one of the charges of that committee is to look at the fees, but I would have to say that we need that money for the future disposal of -- the long term disposal of the permanent waste. We will need that money for current storage and so -- but the rate, the fee, all those things, that's part of the charge of the blue ribbon commission.

(UNKNOWN)

I guess my first reaction to that was that if we collected fees or taxes for everybody that needs it there wouldn't be anything left. It would take all the resources of all the world. I still don't -- I don't consider that to be an acceptable situation.

How long is it going to take this blue ribbon commission to do their work, or are we going to be bound by that or are we still going to have to pass legislation?

Is the Department of Energy going to be able to decide after they receive that information from the commission?

CHU:

Well, the blue ribbon commission is actually beginning to meet tonight and tomorrow on this. The chairs, General Scowcroft, Congressman Hamilton are very eager to get on with this and to deliver a report before the announced deadline date. They want to do this as soon as possible.

And so, we -- we don't want to delay, but again we also want it to be a thoughtful process where this very distinguished committee and any subcommittees they choose to form can really look at this and give us advice. And what we know today is really different from what we -- where we were in 1982 and the mid-1980s. The quote in the Wall Street Journal is correct. We are in a different place.

We know more and I think we would like the blue ribbon commission to take all those -- that new knowledge -- and quite frankly we do want to restart the nuclear industry in the United States and that is part and parcel of what I think. Let me also say, with regard to everybody's favorite topic Yucca Mountain that things evolved during from the first time a decision was made. The Supreme Court ruling changed things. As we went more into it, things changed.

All the sudden -- not all the sudden, but over a period of years, the determination was made that in order to make this repository work and the requirements that were not anticipated at the beginning of this, a titanium shield had to be constructed which was not budgeted. Which -- rough estimates this was an additional \$5+ billion and so, as things progressed along it looked like -- you know, what was happening. And so again, now we want to take stock and get this very distinguished committee to say, give us advice, not parts and advice.

(UNKNOWN)

The people that made the original decision, were they not distinguished?

(LAUGHTER)

Or very distinguished, yes.

CHU:

Everybody was very distinguished. Seriously, what has happened is that the requirements changed. There were a few things -- the most notable requirement was 10,000 years to a 1,000,000 years. A very different requirement, and so there were all sorts of things that were changing in that time -- in the mid-80s to today.

(UNKNOWN)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank...

(CROSSTALK)

(UNKNOWN)

I have a question. And you know the language for the Charter, and as written it says, -- we think Yucca Mountain -- and this Committee under all the discussion last year about Yucca Mountain, the blue ribbon commission was because the Charter says including a deep geologic disposal that Yucca Mountain should be considered.

The Charter also says that -- it has reference that the secretary -- well, such other matters the secretary deemed appropriate. And I guess the question, as directly as I can put it, have you told the blue ribbon commission that Yucca Mountain is not an alternative to be considered?

CHU:

Yes.

(UNKNOWN)

So therefore it is not?

CHU:

Correct.

(UNKNOWN)

Well, I have to tell you that it was our intent, and I think the legislative history that Yucca Mountain -- because of the reference I have on the disposal that Yucca Mountain should also be considered. But that's, I guess, a political battle we'll have to fight somewhere else. Thank you.

(CROSSTALK)

(UNKNOWN)

Just so I'm following up on Congressman's Calvert's question on the notification to Committee on the intent to reprogram. If you haven't made a decision and you haven't made a decision, that means you're responsible for executing the plan as Congress directed?

CHU:

No.

(UNKNOWN)

Tell me why that's wrong.

CHU:

Let me clarify.

(UNKNOWN)

We understand that if you don't do anything that you ought to proceed with continuing on the license application.

CHU:

Let me try and make myself a little bit -- say it a little bit clearer. A decision was made in the administration to discontinue advancing Yucca Mountain, but I think -- I thought the question was, are we going forward this. We can't go forward with this until the NRC rules on it. OK.

Now, so, given that; we're waiting for our NRC ruling, but we -- so, we've applied to the NRC to say we want to discontinue. They make a ruling. So, we would like to discontinue it, but you have to go through these procedures.

(UNKNOWN)

So, until we go through those procedures...

CHU:

Right. Until the NRC says we accept your application to withdraw, we can't do that.

(UNKNOWN)

In the time remaining, can you put a little meat on the bones relative to what you've done to create jobs under the Stimulus Bill? I know you've talked about numbers. And we see from time to time, and I won't pull them out of a hat here, evidence that sometimes one case as we do some good things like invest in Smart Grids.

And then some suggest we lose 36,000 reader jobs. I sort of wonder -- can you paint a picture for us as to -- of the money that's been spent -- we understand the difference. You say you've obligated what, \$26 billion. Tie some job numbers to those.

CHU:

Well, what we...

(UNKNOWN)

And if you can distinguish between private sector jobs as opposed to you know, adding on people to the state payrolls and stuff like that.

CHU:

We believe that most of the Recovery Act money is stimulating private sector jobs. Our experience is once we obligate money that all of a sudden starts a stream in motion. People go out and hire. The so-called 'cost it or spent' is a bill that after you've done the work then you apply for those.

So, that's followed by a month, maybe later. So, once -- and -- so, once you've said, OK, we've selected an organization, a company, whatever, and then you've finally obligated the money, they go and they start hiring. So, in many instances -- we have many, many examples of that...

(UNKNOWN)

I don't mean to be crass, but I did visit your Web site, and I assume under your tutelage that Web site would be of the highest quality. I saw nothing on the DOE's Web site where we have these types of figures, and I can't see anything on there as to how jobs are being created by programs. Have you taken a look at your Web site?

CHU:

Yes I have, but I did not try to -- let me just...

(UNKNOWN)

So, you're telling me it's all there?

CHU:

Well, did you look at the DOE Web site or recovery.gov Web site?

(UNKNOWN)

I assume you have command of the DOE Web site. You've got more money obviously, close to \$40 billion that you might as well claim some credit for creating jobs on your own Web site. So, you're telling me that the Recovery Act has its own Web site.

CHU:

That's correct.

(UNKNOWN)

And is tucked away -- has the totals, but you don't have them on your Web site?

CHU:

Well, we have the totals and so what we -- what you're asking -- I don't know. You'll have to ask my people whether you click on the DOE Web site whether there are links that guide people; but there was, I think, a very good reason for trying to consolidate all the Recovery Act money on a single Web site. So you can click around on the Web, independent of the Agency.

(UNKNOWN)

Yes, but nobody proportionately got, quite honestly, as much money as you did. And I'm sure you're putting it to good use and if we need any more clarity we'll look at the other Web site.

CHU:

And I will make sure that, on the home page of the DOE Web site, there's an easy click to the Recovery Web site if -- in case you want to do that, if it's not there already. Let me do that.

(UNKNOWN)

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Chairman, thank you.

(UNKNOWN)

Yes, Mr. Secretary, as I understand it, they can -- the NRC can withdraw this -- can let you withdraw it with prejudice. They can let you withdraw it without prejudice. They can deny you

from withdrawing the license application. In any case, if they let you withdraw it; waste confidence is an issue as we move forward.

Are you going to propose legislation to effectively legislate waste confidence?

CHU:

Well, again, we're going to take it one step at a time. The blue ribbon commission is there to look at what we know now, also what they will anticipate things being developed for the coming decades. The NRC believes that the current storage, Dry Cast storage of waste doesn't pose an immediate environmental threat.

We can do this -- also we can store this safely and securely, so, for many decades. And so, we have time to develop a strategy. So, the blue ribbon commission is being asked to make recommendations, including legislative recommendations that would then go to Congress. And so, again, -- so rather than jumping at this, given the NRC has said that they could -- we essentially have a century before we have to -- you know, before it becomes an environmental challenge.

(UNKNOWN)

Let me just make one other comment that you can comment on. One of the things that's concerned me is we talked a lot about the science and technology and all that kind of stuff here today, all important work. But at some point and time this stuff's got to get out in the real world.

CHU:

Right.

(UNKNOWN)

I think RPE is a great start for particularly small, new technologies, those kinds of things, things that might not be able to compete in the real world until they have this chance at this kind of thing. What about (inaudible)? I understand you've awarded \$40 million for the design work to two companies for two different designs on what the prismatic reactor and the pebble reactor.

You're now negotiating final cost share. When are we going to start working with industry so that I, as an appropriator, and we as an appropriation committee know what's going to be expected of us. What's going to be the government's responsibility and share and when does industry step in and when are they going to take over?

We need some, I think, formal type of group, organization, whatever that works this out ahead of time. I'm surprised that after awarding these two things that we are now discussing with them cost share. You would think that would almost have been a done deal before the bids were awarded. And I'm just saying, are we doing it right? Do we need a better organizational structure to work with industry?

Because ultimately we can do all the science in the world; if industry doesn't want it, it doesn't mean anything. We've got to -- it's got to be deployable.

CHU:

I agree. But, you know, I think the Department of Energy has been a good partner with industry. We -- and with Congress with legislation had a program to help companies go through the licensing, for example, for the new AP1000 Nuclear Reactor that's still in its process. But that program after 2010 is ending and it's well on its way.

So, in these issues, any new design reactor, if industry is not going to pick it up, we don't really want to see it. These are big expensive things, and so we will continue doing this in the small delivery reactors. There's been a lot of new industry interest in this. So we are facilitating that -- and facilitating again with the licensing so we can actually help the industry get going.

But eventually, you want to step back and say look, is this going to stand on its own. That's again is -- for example, this generation of nuclear reactors like the AP1000. After you've built a couple of them, two or three, that should be enough proof that you can build these things on time, on budget and then let industry decide.

(UNKNOWN)

Let me ask just one follow-up and then I can be done, Mr. Chairman, and I don't have to come back.

PASTOR:

Well, we're not coming back.

(UNKNOWN)

So, I'll be done. Is -- what would -- if the NRC denied your withdrawal of the application what would that do to your F.Y. '11 Budget?

CHU:

Good question. I think we're going to have to regroup there wouldn't we? I don't know. We'll see.

(UNKNOWN)

So, there's no ancillary plan?

CHU:

I think, if they deny our request then we'll have to...

(UNKNOWN)

Reassess would be the word.

CHU:

We'll have to reassess where we are.

(UNKNOWN)

OK. Thank you.

(UNKNOWN)

Let me just put a push on for better communications between all of us, so if there are some issues here moving on, I think it's important to let the Committee leadership and Committee members know.

CHU:

OK.

(UNKNOWN)

You can give us that assurance?

CHU:

Yes, I will.

(UNKNOWN)

We are educable. I'm headed out -- yes, someone more educable than Mr. Simpson, but he's very knowledgeable, as you know, certainly when it comes to Idaho and nuclear issues. But I'm headed out to Berkeley and Livermore to see what's going on out there. And we'd like, sort of, better communication generally speaking between you and our membership.

CHU:

You have -- my pleasure. I -- In regard to, for example to that letter -- I mean, I have been frustrated with the time delay of some of the letters, not only from Congress but in general. And as I sign some of these things I'm actually looking back at the torturous route and why did it take four months.

So, we have a new person in the Department who is Executive Secretary who will hopefully accelerate this. There's no reason in the world it should be taking four months to answer letters.

(UNKNOWN)

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

PASTOR:

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for being with us, and this will -- this will conclude the hearing because, after the series of votes, we will get on with the supplemental on the floor. And the committee rule is that, if there's appropriation business on the floor, that the committee -- subcommittee cannot have hearings.

So, we thank you for being here with us this afternoon. You've heard some of the comments from some of the members and some of their concerns, and just to remind you that, at the beginning of my statement, there will be questions for the record.

CHU:

Right.

PASTOR:

And if you could answer them within the time period requested, we would greatly appreciate it. And as Assistant Secretary Miller said yesterday, next time we see each other, the plan will be in hand.

And so I hope that all the other plans that are due, the (inaudible) and the other ones, we'll have soon, so that -- I'm not as bright as my colleagues over here, so I need to look at some of these plans to dictate what happens in the future.

So I would appreciate it very much. I wish you a great day, and congratulations on your tenure at the Department of Energy.

CHU:

All right. Thank you.

PASTOR:

This concludes the hearing.

CQ Transcriptions, March 24, 2010

List of Panel Members and Witnesses

PANEL MEMBERS:

REP. PETER J. VISCLOSKY, D-IND. CHAIRMAN

REP. CHET EDWARDS, D-TEXAS

REP. ED PASTOR, D-ARIZ.

REP. MARION BERRY, D-ARK.

REP. CHAKA FATTAH, D-PA.

REP. STEVE ISRAEL, D-N.Y.

REP. TIM RYAN, D-OHIO

REP. JOHN W. OLVER, D-MASS.

REP. LINCOLN DAVIS, D-TENN.

REP. JOHN SALAZAR, D-COLO.

REP. DAVID R. OBEY, D-WIS. EX OFFICIO

REP. RODNEY FRELINGHUYSEN, R-N.J. RANKING MEMBER

REP. ZACH WAMP, R-TENN.

REP. MIKE SIMPSON, R-IDAHO

REP. DENNY REHBERG, R-MONT.

REP. KEN CALVERT , R-CALIF.

REP. RODNEY ALEXANDER, R-LA.

REP. JERRY LEWIS, R-CALIF. EX OFFICIO

WITNESSES:

SECRETARY OF ENERGY STEVEN CHU