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Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee: DOE FY 2016 budget hearing February 12, 2015

On February 12, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing to discuss the fiscal year (FY) 2016 budget proposal for the Department of Energy (DOE). The President's budget requests \$30 billion dollars for DOE.

Secretary of Energy Ernest Moniz answered questions about the aging electrical grid, coal-based power, and nuclear waste. He highlighted recent DOE successes such as DOE-funded research in oil and natural gas contributing to the overall abundance and low prices of the commodity. Secretary Moniz also praised the increases in funding for energy innovation and efficiency standards in the President's FY 2016 budget.

Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV) expressed concern over carbon sequestration rules, which the Senators deem prohibitively expensive at this point. Members were also concerned that the proposed budget goes against previously set spending levels and creates a perceived disparity between the amount of funding on renewable energy sources and on fossil fuels. Senators Angus King (I-ME), Rob Portman (R-OH), and Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA) articulated the importance of funding nuclear waste cleanup. Secretary Moniz testified to DOE's continuing work on ensuring safer disposal of nuclear waste and the importance of having community consent for the movement and storage of nuclear waste.

Senators also asked about the state of the aging electric grid. Secretary Moniz explained that DOE is working to get better data to use in decision making. In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, DOE was able to replace electric grid infrastructure in key transport corridors with micro grids to reinforce the grid resilience and stability in case of future extreme weather.
