

Opening Statement
Hearing on the Nomination of Dr. Ernie Moniz
to be Secretary of the Department of Energy
April 9, 2013

Good morning, Chairman Wyden. I want to start by thanking you for scheduling this important hearing, and I also want to thank the two gentlemen who have come to testify on behalf of our nominee. Senator Bingaman, it is with warmth and fond memories that I join in welcoming you back to this Committee. And General Scowcroft, it means a great deal to see you here, ready to vouch for Dr. Moniz.

Dr. Moniz, I appreciate your willingness to serve as Secretary of Energy, and it bodes well that the General and the Senator are supporting you. You may prove to be the rare nominee who gathers wide bipartisan acclaim. I certainly enjoyed our meeting before the Easter recess. And I'm impressed by both your work and your knowledge.

I also appreciate your intellectual honesty. You have spoken in favor of a free-flowing global gas trade. You have defended unconventional gas from spurious criticism. At the same time, you have refrained from opportunistically changing your mind about nuclear power after Fukushima. If confirmed, I trust that you will continue to tell us what you *really* think, no matter what the issue may be.

That will be critical because, as you know, you are not signing up for the easiest job. If confirmed, you will find yourself in charge of thousands of scientists, many of whom are engaged in exciting, cutting-edge work. But you will also inherit a range of challenges and problems. Thirty-five years after the Department of Energy was created, we are still in search of a broad, coherent, and consistent policy in this area. Energy-related programs and initiatives remain fragmented and scattered throughout the federal government, not enough money is getting "to the bench" for research and development, and too often it appears that silos within the Department stand in the way of progress. In recent years, I have become concerned that DOE is not clearly and unambiguously working to keep energy abundant, affordable, diverse, and secure. As I see it, we need a stronger voice in the councils of the Administration for energy supply.

As if that were not enough, recently we have seen the Department make a series of bad or unnecessary bets – on Solyndra, A123, and others – that have left taxpayers on the hook for substantial losses. All of us would do well to remember that success is not measured through spending or good intentions, but the actual results that are achieved.

Chairman Wyden and I are working to increase the amount of oversight conducted by this Committee, and we believe that will help improve the Department of Energy. I'm optimistic that our Committee can also reform some of its programs, and end those that aren't working as planned. But we will also need help from our Secretary of Energy. Policy and management are different animals, and the person we confirm to run DOE must excel at both.

Dr. Moniz, from all indications, you are off to a good start. I want to thank you again for accepting this nomination. And I look forward to hearing how your background has prepared you to operate an agency of this size and scope.

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