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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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May 17, 2023

The Honorable Jennifer Granholm
Secretary
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

Dear Secretary Granholm,

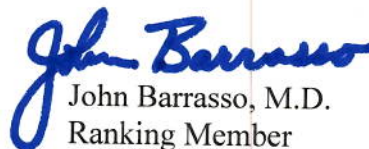
I write to you to formally request that the Department of Energy (DOE) immediately block all employee access to ChatGPT and other third-party artificial intelligence (AI) tools. The Department must implement robust security measures and rules to ensure that DOE personnel and information are sufficiently protected from malign actors.

As you may know, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has already blocked employee access to AI tools pending an internal review of these tools' associated risks. According to the EPA, the agency is currently assessing "potential legal, privacy and cybersecurity concerns [related to AI tools] as releasing information to AI tools could lead to potential data breaches, identify theft, financial fraud or inadvertent release of privileged information."¹

It is concerning DOE has not taken similar, decisive action. DOE has a critical mission to "ensure America's security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental and nuclear challenges through transformative science and technology solutions." This security-focused mission makes DOE a prime target for adversaries that wish to undermine our national security and technological capabilities. The use of ChatGPT and other third-party AI tools by DOE employees for official business only compounds the risk of compromise and attack of sensitive DOE information and systems.

Therefore, it is imperative DOE immediately block access to third-party AI tools across all DOE elements until a robust internal review of the use of third-party AI tools is conducted, and guidance and rules for these tools' use is issued. I request that you answer the following questions by May 31, 2023. I look forward to your timely reply.

Sincerely,


John Barrasso, M.D.
Ranking Member

¹ [POLITICO Pro | Article | EPA blocks employee use of ChatGPT](#)

Questions

1. Can you commit that your Department will immediately block access to third-party AI tools across all DOE elements until a robust internal review of the use of third-party AI tools is conducted?
 - a. If not, why not?
2. Can you commit that your Department will work to immediately conduct a review of the use of third-party AI tools by DOE personnel?
 - a. If not, why not?
3. Can you commit that your Department will publish internal guidance and rules for the use of third-party AI tools before June 30, 2023?
 - a. If not, why not?
4. Please provide copies of all internal guidance issued as a result of this review no later than June 30, 2023.