



United States Senate Committee on

Energy & Natural Resources



Senator Lisa Murkowski, Alaska, *Chairman*

**Opening Statement
Hearing on DOE's FY 2016 Budget Request
Senator Lisa Murkowski
February 12, 2015**

Good morning, everyone. The Committee will come to order.

We are here to consider the President's budget request for the Department of Energy for Fiscal Year 2016. This marks the first of three budget hearings our Committee will hold before the end of this month, and our first formal review of DOE's budget since April 2013.

Secretary Moniz, I think it's been about a year and a half since you've been before the committee. That's a long time. We'd like to have you here more frequently, but in fairness to you, I know you have made the effort to come and visit many of us outside of the committee process, keep us informed with what is happening within the department. I appreciate that.

I have been deeply critical of the President's overall budget, as it would bust through our statutory spending caps and raise taxes by more than \$2 trillion over the next decade. There has been a lot of discussion by many that the President's request is going nowhere, but hearings such as this one allow us to take a more granular look at it, to see if we can't find something we can work together on.

The budget for the Department of Energy is hardly the most controversial part of the President's request. I largely credit you for that, Secretary Moniz. I think you have been a steady leader, intent on improving your Department's performance. I think you have been successful in avoiding perhaps some of the drama that we sometimes see around here. Again, I'm appreciative of your leadership.

Nevertheless, I am obligated to repeat my usual criticism of DOE's proposed budget. This request embraces an "all-of-the-above" energy policy on paper and in words – I think if we look through our packets, the term "all-of-the-above" is certainly there. But I worry that it is "all-of-the-above" in words, and not necessarily in practice. We see significant increases for efficiency, vehicle, and renewable technologies, but virtually all funding for fossil energy would be directed to carbon capture, methane, or some other environmental consideration.

We have now fully settled the argument about whether American energy production can affect global prices. I think it clearly does. I think we recognize that, and I think that's a good thing. We are benefiting greatly from it. The question is whether we will keep this going, or instead allow the President to lock down our resources, in places like Alaska. DOE clearly has a role here, too – it should be researching methane hydrates and other unconventional resources to help ensure that energy remains affordable long into the future.

As we discuss the budget aspects within the DOE, Mr. Secretary, I would hope that we can find some common ground. I had indicated my support of the opportunities for innovation that we see coming out

of ARPA-E. We can be doing more there, and we've had the opportunity to talk about that. As you continue your leadership there, know that this committee will be working with you on those areas where I think we can advance America's energy policy. But we're also going to be very cognizant, and very careful as we shepherd taxpayer dollars into these innovations and technologies.

With that, I will turn to the Ranking Member and then we'll hear from the Secretary.

#