



**Opening Statement**  
**Hearing on DOE's FY 2017 Budget Request**  
**Senator Murkowski**  
**March 3, 2016**

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

We're here to consider the President's request for the Department of Energy for Fiscal Year 2017. This marks the second of three budget hearings our committee will hold, with our final hearing to examine the Forest Service budget scheduled for next Tuesday.

Secretary Moniz, it is good to see you back here in Washington, DC. I want to thank you again for traveling to Bethel last month for our field hearing, and for the time you took to see the need, the opportunity, and the progress we are making on energy innovation in rural Alaska. We appreciate the effort you make to work with us, and are looking forward to your testimony today.

I have been critical of much of the President's overall budget request, including his proposed \$10.25 per barrel tax on oil that will hurt families, businesses, and our broader economy.

The President's budget again features the usual assortment of tax hikes, fee increases, and other policies that will only make our primary energy industries – oil, natural gas, and coal – less productive.

Despite totaling \$4.1 trillion, the President's budget also cuts the base funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, LIHEAP, which helps thousands of families in Alaska stay warm during the winter cold.

Those are a few of my general criticisms of the President's budget request. But the reason we have hearings like this one is so that we can take a closer look, and see if there are things we can work together on within specific areas. To your credit, Secretary Moniz, the budget for the Department of Energy has plenty that fits into that category. I believe that is a tribute to your leadership, and to your efforts to improve your Department's performance in a cooperative, bipartisan manner.

Admittedly, this is not the budget for the Department of Energy that I would write. I believe it only partially adheres to the balanced energy policy that most of us agree on – with significant increases for efficiency, vehicle, and renewable technologies, but a cut proposed for fossil R&D, including the important work the Department should be doing to help develop methane hydrates.

I have some questions about the mandatory spending this budget proposes

But here's the good news. Secretary Moniz, even in the instances where we may initially disagree, I know that you will work with us to find common ground. And when it comes to the importance of innovation to America's future, I know you and I are on the same page, even if our numbers don't always align.

So thank you again for your leadership – and I look forward to learning more about what your Department is proposing here today.

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