



April 18, 2013

Opening Statement of Chairman Ron Wyden on Dr. Moniz Business Meeting

Since the Department of Energy was created in 1977, one of the major challenges facing every Secretary of Energy, appointed by a Democratic president, appointed by a Republican president, has been our nation's dependence on imported energy.

With the development of new technologies, that may soon change.

I support Dr. Moniz, Dr. Moniz could become the first Secretary of Energy who instead of having to confront energy shortages and scarcity, instead would oversee an era of abundant carbon-reducing natural gas and dramatic growth of renewable energy technologies.

As Secretary, Dr. Moniz will face new environmental and other challenges from the shale revolution. But in most respects, this is a good problem for our nation to have from both an economic and from an environmental standpoint. Through a combination of increased use of natural gas, energy efficiency and renewable energy, US carbon emissions have dropped to the lowest levels since 1994.

Abundant, low cost natural gas also provides our country with a competitive advantage over competitors in Europe and Asia whose costs are four or five times as high as our manufacturers.

And it is certainly a national security advantage to be able to rely on our own energy resources instead of unstable parts of the world that certainly don't get up every day with our nation's best interests in mind.

From my experience working with Dr. Moniz, I believe he is more than up to the challenges that our country is going to face in this historic transition for our energy sector.

With his background as a well-respected scientist, I am confident that Dr. Moniz is going to use the best science and the most current data in considering key policy questions. He has shown he will take an independent, data-driven approach as a Professor at MIT and director of that

University's Energy Initiative, which has led numerous, cutting-edge studies on a whole range of energy issues.

He knows how the department works from the inside because he has experience there.

Dr. Moniz understands the challenges of the DOE weapons complex. He said unequivocally that the Department of Energy's status quo, let me repeat that, the Department of Energy's status quo at Hanford is unacceptable. And he also recognizes that all the DOE facilities will have to find more effective and efficient approaches in this era of tight budgets and sequestration.

Dr. Moniz knows more needs to be done to address climate not only to avoid more frequent and more severe natural disasters but also as a technological insurance policy to ensure that our nation doesn't lose our competitive edge, particularly to China and other countries that have ramped up their investments in clean energy. That means driving down the cost of renewable and other new technologies so they will be competitive.

For these reasons, and others I am pleased to support Dr. Moniz' nomination and I urge my colleagues to do the same.