Dear Senator Mikulski, Senator Shelby, Representative Rogers, and Representative Lowey:

On behalf of the American Energy Innovation Council (AEIC), we urge you to maintain public investments in clean energy innovation programs—especially the Advanced Projects Research Agency - Energy (ARPA-E)—in Fiscal Year 2014 Appropriations legislation. As the House and Senate Appropriations Committees prepare to make allocations in line with the Ryan-Murray Budget, we hope you will work to maintain U.S. competitiveness in energy science and technology and sustain public investments in R&D that drive future U.S. economic growth. In particular, AEIC asks that you maintain consistent funding levels for ARPA-E and other energy innovation investments.

The AEIC is a group of America’s top business executives who came together to recommend ways to promote American innovation in clean energy technology. We are united in our belief that technology innovation—especially in energy—is at the heart of many of the central economic, national security, competitiveness, and environmental challenges facing our nation. Central to our recommendations is strong support for robust, public investments in innovative energy technologies. Programs such as ARPA-E must continue in order to bolster our country’s energy innovation system and improve our country’s long-term economic competitiveness.

We advise maintaining public investments in ARPA-E at or above its FY2013 levels of $275 million. ARPA-E employs an entrepreneurial, outcome-oriented approach to developing breakthrough technologies in a variety of energy sources. By investing in early-stage, transformational energy technologies in consultation with private firms, ARPA-E empowers innovators across a range of technology pathways and successfully leverages follow-on private capital for innovation and commercialization. ARPA-E provides resources and takes risk in areas the private sector by itself simply cannot, and its widely lauded approach to R&D is now being copied in the R&D approaches of other offices like EERE. ARPA-E is a critical part of restoring
America’s lead in energy innovation that will drive our future economic growth and maintain our competitive edge.

Additionally, we urge you to maintain public investments in DOE’s Office of Science and its Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE). Basic research is a function best suited for government, which can sustain and direct long-range scientific endeavors and research facilities in a manner that the private sector simply cannot. Between its work on basic energy sciences, advanced computing, and other basic research, DOE’s Office of Science is a central driver in the innovation ecosystem that sustains America’s long-run scientific competitiveness. The investments we make in DOE’s Office of Science today produce the discoveries of tomorrow, creating the fundamental knowledge that inventors use and businesses ultimately commercialize. DOE’s EERE complements this by investing in R&D that increases the performance and lowers the costs of next-generation commercial energy technologies that, in turn, contribute further to U.S. economic growth. By hastening lower-cost energy technologies, investments in EERE speeds up the contribution of energy science to economic growth and supports American companies in their drive for global market share.

My colleagues and I recognize that federal funding will be limited for the foreseeable future and that any federal dollar must be spent wisely to achieve the maximum impact. Energy technology R&D, and ARPA-E specifically, is a smart investment for America’s future. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues in Congress to ensure continued support for these important activities to keep the U.S. economy competitive and growing.

Sincerely,

Chad Holliday
Co-Chair
American Energy Innovation Council

Norm Augustine
Co-Chair
American Energy Innovation Council