

**Chairman Lamar Alexander Opening Statement
Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development**

Markup of the Energy and Water Development Act, 2017

April 13, 2016

(As prepared for delivery)

Senator Feinstein and I have worked together in a fair and accommodating manner, under challenging fiscal constraints, to create a bipartisan bill for the subcommittee's consideration.

We expect the bill will be approved by the full Appropriations Committee tomorrow, and can be considered by the full Senate as early as next week.

The fiscal year 2017 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill this year provides a total of \$37.5 billion, which is \$355 million more than last year.

Reaching a bipartisan agreement was not easy. This subcommittee received an allocation for defense spending that is nearly \$1.163 billion above last year, but is more than \$808 million below last year for non-defense spending.

The funding included in this bill supports several federal agencies that do important work, including:

- the U.S. Department of Energy
- the Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- the Army Corps of Engineers
- the Bureau of Reclamation
- the National Nuclear Security Administration, and;
- the Appalachian Regional Commission

We also started with an unrealistic budget proposal from the president, which cut the Corps of Engineers by \$1.4 billion and proposed \$2.3 billion in new mandatory funding for the Department of Energy.

The bill Senator Feinstein and I have negotiated invests in our waterways, puts us one step closer to doubling basic energy research, helps to resolve the nuclear waste stalemate, cleans up hazardous materials at Cold War sites, and maintains our nuclear weapons stockpile.

The bill also reduces wasteful spending because of the subcommittee's intensive oversight of the president's budget request and the Department of Energy.

Every year Senator Feinstein and I have tried to conduct proper oversight and eliminate at least one low-priority program to reduce waste. We have worked together to keep big projects like the Uranium Processing Facility on time and on budget, and make sure that we are effectively using

limited taxpayer dollars. The Uranium Processing Facility is on time and on budget, and the nuclear facilities must be 90% designed before construction can start.

This year we have again eliminated funding for ITER, the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor in France. This saves \$125 million. ITER started in 2005 with an initial cost of \$1.1 billion, but we have already invested that much and the project will not likely be completed until after 2025.

We also continue to be very concerned about the cost of the MOX Fuel Fabrication Facility in South Carolina, and we are working with Senator Graham and the Senate Armed Services Committee to find a path forward.

Senator Feinstein and I are also recommending a bill that does not include controversial riders because we believe these issues should be resolved on the floor by the full Senate.

The last time the Energy and Water Appropriations bill was considered by the Senate and passed under the “regular order” was 2009. I look forward to having a regular appropriations process again this year, and now I’d like to highlight a few of the things this bill accomplishes – things supported by many of my colleagues.

Waterways Infrastructure

This bill restores the \$1.4 billion the president proposed to cut from the Corps of Engineers, and sets a new record level of funding for the Corps in a regular appropriations bill.

There is not a funding line in the budget that more U.S. senators ask us to increase funding for than the Corps of Engineers. The Corps rebuilds locks and dams, dredges our rivers and harbors, works to prevent floods and storm damage, and builds environmental restoration projects.

If we had simply approved the president’s request, the Corps of Engineers would receive less than what Congress appropriated in FY2006, setting us back more than a decade.

Of particular importance to Tennessee, we have provided enough funding for the Corps to continue building a new Chickamauga Lock in fiscal year 2017. Up to \$37 million will be available to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to continue work on Chickamauga Lock. Only last month the Corps reiterated in its most recent study that Chickamauga Lock continues to be the 4th highest priority of essential American waterways to be rebuilt.

We also included \$1.3 billion for the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund. This is the third consecutive year that we have funded the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund consistent with the funding level that Congress recommended in the Water Resources Development Act.

This funding is used to deepen harbors, including Gulfport, Charleston, Mobile, Texas Harbors, Louisiana Harbors, Anchorage Harbor and Savannah Harbor.

Research and U.S. Department of Energy Priorities

Doubling basic energy research is a goal I have long supported, and is one of the most important things we can do to unleash our free enterprise system to help provide the clean, cheap, reliable energy we need to power our 21st-century economy.

Sen. Durbin and I worked together on an amendment to the Energy bill that increases the authorized funding levels for the Office of Science by about 7 percent per year which would double the Office of Science's budget from a little over \$5 billion today to more than \$10 billion in 10 years. The Senate adopted our amendment by voice vote which shows how much support there is for this goal.

The president proposed to invest more in energy research, including the Mission Innovation proposal - the pledge launched by the U.S. and 19 other countries at the Climate Summit in Paris to double federal clean energy research over the next five years.

The problem is that the president's budget request proposed \$2.259 billion in new mandatory funding for the Department of Energy.

However, the president's commitment to doubling federal clean energy research with mandatory funding comes at the expense of other resources and agencies – which is at best unhelpful, and at worst it's misleading. It is wishful thinking, and everyone knows it is not going to happen.

Instead we focused on setting priorities for discretionary funding, which is annually approved by Congress. Our top priority was the Office of Science which receives \$5.4 billion to support basic energy research – which is \$50 million more than last year.

This is the second year we have been able to increase funding for the Office of Science, which sets a new record level of funding for the Office of Science in a regular appropriations bill. This puts us one step closer to doubling funding for federal basic energy research.

The bill also provides \$292.7 million for ARPA-E, an agency that invests in high-impact energy technologies, which is \$1.7 million more than last year.

The bill also supports the Department of Energy's continued efforts to advance extreme scale or "exascale" computing, and includes a total of \$285 million to produce these next generation computers.

Promoting Nuclear Power and Solving the Nuclear Waste Stalemate

Nuclear power provides about 20 percent of our country's electricity, and 60 percent of its carbon-free electricity.

If we're going to have the abundance of clean, cheap, reliable energy we need to power our 21st-century economy, we need to unleash nuclear power by removing the obstacles standing in its way.

Our legislation sends a strong signal about our support for developing new technologies that will support the next generation of nuclear power plants. We included \$94.5 million for Advanced Reactors, which is \$21 million more than the president's budget request. We also provided \$95 million for Small Modular Reactors, which is a \$32.5 million increase over last year.

One way our bill does this is by taking important steps toward solving our country's stalemate over what to do with nuclear waste, and this is another bipartisan issue that Senator Feinstein and I agree on.

Our legislation includes a pilot program for consolidated nuclear waste storage, which Senator Feinstein and I have introduced the past four years. The new sites we are seeking to establish would not take the place of Yucca Mountain — we have more than enough used fuel to fill Yucca Mountain to its legal capacity — but rather would complement it.

We also provide funding for the U.S. Department of Energy to store nuclear waste at private facilities approved by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, such as the one proposed in West Texas.

We're also supporting research in this bill that will help continue the work that is necessary to safely extend nuclear power operating licenses from 60 to 80 years.

Supporting National Security

This legislation provides a total of \$12.9 billion for the National Nuclear Security Administration, and fully funds the warhead life extension programs recommended by the Nuclear Weapons Council and the design of the Ohio-class replacement submarine.

It also supports crucial weapons facilities related to our national security. The bill provides \$575 million for the Uranium Processing Facility in Tennessee, which keeps the project on track to be completed by 2025 at a cost of no more than \$6.5 billion.

This legislation also advances our efforts to clean up hazardous materials at Cold War sites. A total of \$5.4 billion is provided to support cleanup efforts, which is \$144 million above the president's budget request.

Conclusion

This bill adequately funds our nation's energy and water priorities given our fiscal constraints, and I look forward to bringing the bill to the full Senate and working with my colleagues to pass the bill in the coming weeks.

With that, I'd like to recognize Senator Feinstein for her remarks.

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