



April 25, 2017

Honorable Orrin Hatch
 Chairman, Committee on Finance
 125 S. State Street, #8402
 Salt Lake City UT 84138

Dear Chairman Hatch:

As business and community leaders, we want to thank you for being a partner in helping to drive Utah's innovation and clean energy industry and being a voice for us in our Nation's capital. We, the undersigned local and national businesses and community leaders, are writing today to express our concerns with the substantial reductions in energy technology research and development funding in President Trump's FY 2018 federal budget proposal and the detrimental impact such cuts would have on the future of Utah's clean energy industry. At this important time abrupt and significant cuts in program funding at the Department of Energy (DOE) will hinder the long-term growth of the clean tech industry and the associated economic, job growth and air quality benefits.

Utah has capitalized on Department of Energy resources and we're in the midst of an exciting energy transformation. Energy efficiency and renewable energy now make up a significant part of our energy portfolio and our state is rapidly becoming a clean energy leader and innovation hub. Utah ranks 6th nationally in solar capacity, surging forward in the last year. Energy efficiency and solar power employ over 30,000 workers and 5,000 Utah workers respectively. But there is much more work to do to advance technologies and integration strategies to keep Utah, and frankly the Nation, on top.

We are concerned with the significant reductions in funding for programs at the DOE in the President's FY 2018 budget request, particularly cuts for the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE)

program budget. While we await further detail, the administration’s budget “blueprint” calls for as much as \$1 billion in cuts to energy research and development programs for energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies, as well as the outright elimination of the State Energy Program (SEP), the Advanced Research Project Agency-Energy (ARPA-E), the Weatherization Assistance Program, and the Environmental Protection Agency’s ENERGY STAR program. This reduction would represent a cut of 50% of the current budget.

DOE EERE programs have been vital to building a clean energy industry. While industry creates the jobs, the EERE research and development programs incubate new technologies and solve big picture challenges such as transmission and integration of high penetrations of renewable energy into our energy grid, while also removing barriers and lowering costs. Programs such as the SunShot Initiative, which you have been a strong supporter of, have helped to substantially reduce the cost of making and installing solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays. DOE Buildings and Vehicle Technology programs have been critical to bringing groundbreaking technologies including light-emitting diode (LED) lighting, smart high-performance buildings, and batteries for electric vehicles to market. Utah businesses continue to harness the ENERGY STAR program as a voluntary means to save energy, save money and reduce air pollution. Utah’s solar investment alone represents over \$3 billion and our energy efficiency improvements are saving Utah families and businesses a quarter of a billion dollars each year in utility costs.

As the Senate begins its annual budget appropriations process, we ask you to work with your Senate colleagues to maintain current levels of funding for DOE EERE programs, the Weatherization Assistance Program, and the ENERGY STAR program. Substantial reductions in funding to these important DOE energy technology research, development and delivery programs will stall the cross sector, big picture, long view research and programs that have been critical to Utah’s and our Nation’s leadership.

Now is not the time to take our foot off the gas. DOE EERE programs assist not only Utah, but indeed our Nation, in the developing and adopting clean energy, efficiency and vehicle technologies that deliver affordable, stable-priced and sustainable energy, provide good jobs, improve air quality and importantly bolster our energy and national security.

Thank you for listening to our concerns and for being a partner for Utah’s clean energy industry. Please contact Sarah Wright at Utah Clean Energy at 801-363-4046 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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