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INDIAN AFFAIRS

BUDGET

July 23, 2025

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the proposed reductions in the Fiscal Year 2026 federal budget to research and development programs within the Department of Energy (DOE), including significant cuts to the Office of Science, the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), and the Advanced Research Projects Agency – Energy (ARPA–E). These proposed changes jeopardize not only our nation's economic competitiveness but also our national security, energy independence, and capacity for innovation. Slashes to these programs undermine the core principles and opportunities that America promises its citizens: through bold investment in knowledge and innovation, we build a stronger, safer, and more just future.

The national laboratories are not just the Department of Energy's research hubs; they are engines of economic empowerment. These nearly **80,000 scientists, engineers, and staff** are at the forefront of pioneering technologies in advanced energy systems, life-saving medical isotopes, next-generation manufacturing, and national defense.[1] The proposed **14% reduction to the Office of Science** and **74% cut to EERE** will have an immediate and destabilizing impact – threatening the continuation of critical research programs, leading to the loss of thousands of skilled jobs. Investments in science ARE investments in American leadership.

Specifically, EERE has been responsible for more than **$624 billion in net economic benefits**, heavily contributing to U.S. energy bill reductions of **over $800 billion** since 1980.[2,3] These cuts will impede **100s of ongoing lab-based projects** in clean energy, grid modernization, and industrial decarbonization, while endangering **1,000s of jobs** across multiple national laboratories, and undermine a network that has historically returned **over $10 in economic**

[1] National Laboratory Directors Council (2024), *Ensuring U.S. Leadership in a Competitive Future*, https://nationallabs.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/NLDC-Ensuring-US-Leadership-2024.pdf
[2] DOE (2024), *Summary of Seven Economic Return-on-Investment Impact Evaluation Studies across Five Offices within the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy*, https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2025-01/eere-iso-roi-report-2024.pdf
[3] DOE (2025), *Reduced Energy Costs*, https://www.energy.gov/eere/reduced-energy-costs

output for every dollar of federal R&D investment.[4,5,6] We don't just silence the potential for future discoveries that could deliver heat and power to every corner of the country, we squander the ingenuity of the very Americans who have the knowledge and drive to make it happen.

Similarly, proposed budget reductions would scale back fellowships, internships, and research grants that support tens of thousands of graduate and postdoctoral researchers.[7] Around **half of STEM graduate students** rely on federal support to complete their training.[8,9,10] The elimination of these opportunities would be devastating to early-career researchers and erode our long-term competitiveness, particularly in fields like quantum, biotechnology, and energy.

For decades, DOE's national laboratories have played a critical role in translating federal research into commercial success. The DOE national labs outperform other agencies in innovation productivity, producing **3.5x more patents per dollar** and **1.4x higher licensing rate per patent** than the federal agency average. Every year the labs execute **1000s of partnership agreements**, including **100s of agreements to commercialize technology**.[11,12] These efforts are part of a larger ecosystem that has enabled the United States to maintain global leadership in critical technologies such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, advanced computing, and energy efficiency. This innovation culture, rooted in federally funded basic and applied science, has given the United States a durable advantage over strategic competitors, including China, whose state-led investments are rapidly closing the gap.[13]

Programs like ARPA-E, which the budget proposes to cut by **57%**, have been instrumental in maintaining this leadership. The agency has funded **over 1,000 high-risk projects**, resulted in over **700 patents**, and attracted over **$12 billion in follow-on private investment**.[14] Reducing federal investments in ARPA-E and DOE lab commercialization programs could shift the global balance of innovation. Without adequate support, the United States risks ceding leadership in

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[4] Holland & Knight (2025), *FY2026 DOE Budget Summary*, https://www.hklaw.com/en/insights/publications/2025/06/full-fy-2026-budget-reorients-doe-around-nuclear
[5] DOE-EERE (2024), *Investment Snapshot: Advancing Energy Innovation Across America,* https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2024-12/eere-2024-investment-snapshot-report.pdf
[6]DOE (2017), *Aggregate Economic Return on Investment in the U.S. DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy,* https://www.energy.gov/eere/analysis/articles/aggregate-economic-return-investment-us-doe-office-energy-efficiency-and
[7] Scientific American (2025), *Funding Cuts Hurt Early-Career Researchers*, https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-trumps-federal-funding-cuts-are-hurting-early-career-researchers-and/
[8] National Academies of Sciences (2024), *Revitalizing the U.S. Research Enterprise*, https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/27873/chapter/3
[9] National Bureau of Economic Research (2025), *Funding the U.S. Scientific Training Ecosystem: New Data, Methods, and Evidence,* https://www.nber.org/papers/w33944
[10] National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (2023), *Research Funding for U.S. Doctorate Recipients at Research-Intensive Institutions,* https://ncses.nsf.gov/pubs/nsf23349
[11] DOE (2020), *The State of the DOE National Laboratories*, DOE National Labs Report FINAL_0.pdf
[12] DOE (2025), *TechLink NNSA Report,* https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2025-04/TechLink_NNSA-Report_Digital_Final.pdf
[13] National Academies of Sciences (2024), *Revitalizing the U.S. Research Enterprise*, https://nap.nationalacademies.org/read/27873/chapter/4
[14] GAO (2022), *ARPA-E: Evaluation and Recommendations*, https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-22-104775.pdf

emerging industries to nations with more consistent and centralized science investment strategies. Slashing funding to these programs is not fiscal responsibility – it is strategic negligence.

The United States did not become a global leader in science and technology by retreating from bold investment. We became that leader by making deliberate, courageous decisions to fund basic and applied research, to believe in our academic institutions, and to empower our national laboratories as centers of excellence. At a time when other nations are dramatically increasing their R&D investments, it would be short-sighted and strategically dangerous for the United States to step back.

As a proud and steadfast champion of the groundbreaking innovation coming out of the national labs in my state, I'm constantly reminded of their extraordinary contributions. At Sandia National Laboratories, researchers invented clean rooms, a technology essential to manufacturing microchips that power high performance computing and artificial intelligence, while also revolutionizing hospital operating room safety. Sandia isn't just refining the economics of LED light bulbs, they're re-engineering light itself to promote human health and increase agricultural yields. At Los Alamos, during the Human Genome Project, scientists developed GenBank, the genetic sequence database that has become indispensable to modern drug discovery and our understanding of disease. Los Alamos also remains one of the nation's only sources of critical medical isotopes used in targeted cancer therapies – treatments that can destroy breast cancer cells while sparing healthy tissue. Slashing funding to these transformative institutions isn't just short-sighted – it's an assault on the standard of living, health, and opportunity for every American.

America's scientific capacity is one of its most valuable assets. We must treat it accordingly – with care, with vision, and with the full weight of federal support. I respectfully urge you to reconsider these reductions and restore full funding for DOE research and innovation programs – including ARPA-E, EERE, the Office of Science, the associated workforce, and their commercialization initiatives.

Thank you for your consideration and commitment to the future of American science, security, and prosperity.

Sincerely,

Ben Ray Luján

Ben Ray Luján
United States Senator