

Testimony of Director of the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity
U.S. Department of Energy
Before the
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Energy
U.S. House of Representatives
April 10, 2019

Chairman Rush, Ranking Member Upton, and Members of the Subcommittee, it is a privilege and an honor to serve at the Department of Energy (the “Department” or “DOE”), an agency tasked with, among other important responsibilities, managing the Department’s 17 National Laboratories, supporting early-stage energy R&D across a wide range of science and engineering disciplines, managing the nation’s nuclear weapons and working effectively with states on our Nation’s energy challenges. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Department regarding legislation pertinent to DOE that is now pending in the House.

As the Administration continues to review these bills, I appreciate the ongoing bipartisan efforts to address our Nation’s energy challenges and I look forward to working with the Committee.

The Office of Economic Impact and Diversity (ED) includes the Office of Minority Economic Impact which was established by statute in 1979 to increase minority participation in energy sector programs.

ED’s mission is broad and diverse, with a number of programs and initiatives that focus on meeting its statutory obligations and enhancing the value of DOE’s mission. ED’s programs and initiatives are focused on business and education to establish critical linkages among minority serving institutions, minority businesses, and Federal agencies to address economic development in underserved communities and support energy workforce development.

ED is committed to increasing efforts for supporting greater inclusion of underserved minority populations—African American, Hispanic, Native American, Asian American & Pacific Islander, Puerto Rican, and Alaska Native—including women, veterans, and formerly incarcerated persons, into science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields and energy related industries.

As Deputy Secretary Brouillette assured the Chairman during his hearing before this Committee in January 2018, ED has recently reinvigorated the Minorities in Energy Initiative – now being called Equity in Energy. The program is twofold with external and internal engagement. For external engagement, ED is conducting listening sessions across the country with underrepresented groups to share insights and ideas to increase minority representation in the energy sector. For internal engagement, ED is working with all of the Department’s program offices and the National Laboratories to bring awareness to these issues and address potential solutions. The Equity in Energy initiative focuses on STEM aptitude, supplier diversity, technical assistance, and workforce development.

ED also encompasses the Minority Educational Institution Student Partnership Program (MEISPP), which provides students with summer internships at the DC headquarters and the 17 National Labs. Since 2005, over 650 interns from minority serving educational institutions have participated in the program.

DOE has provided over \$700 million to support Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other minority serving institutions (MSIs), through research and development programs. In fact, my office was able to partner with and provide financial assistance to several HBCUs and MSIs this past year to promote STEM and energy related fields. To further these efforts, ED is working to release a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) this fiscal year.

Additionally, I am the Department's White House Initiative designee to Promote Excellence and Innovation at HBCUs. In this role, I lead the Economic Development and Competitiveness cluster and collaborate with the Departments of Treasury, Housing and Urban Development, Education, Commerce, Agriculture, as well as the Small Business Administration. The cluster aims to engage the Nation's HBCUs to develop workforce and community investments partnerships.

With respect to the proposed legislation, please note that the Department has provided the Committee with technical assistance in reviewing the bill, and will continue to work with the committee as the legislation being discussed today is advanced.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be here today. The Department appreciates the ongoing bipartisan efforts to address our Nation's energy challenges, and I look forward to addressing any questions.