

METHANE HYDRATE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
U.S. Department of Energy

Advisory Committee Charter

1. **Committee's Official Designation:** Methane Hydrate Advisory Committee (MHAC)
2. **Authority:** This charter establishes the Methane Hydrate Advisory Committee (Committee) pursuant to Title IX, Subtitle F, Section 968, Methane Hydrate Research of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (EPACT), Public Law 109-58. This charter establishes the MHAC under the authority of the Department of Energy (DOE). The MHAC is being renewed in accordance with the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA), as amended, 5 U.S.C., App. 2.
3. **Objectives and Scope of Activities:** The Committee provides advice to the Secretary of Energy by developing recommendations and broad programmatic priorities for the methane hydrate research and development program; providing scientific oversight for the methane hydrates program, including assessing progress toward program goals, evaluating program balance, and providing recommendations to enhance the quality of the program over time; and submitting to Congress assessments of the methane hydrate research program and the 5-year research plan of the DOE.
4. **Description of Duties:** The duties of the Committee are solely advisory in nature.
5. **Official(s) to Whom this Committee Reports:** The Committee will report to the Secretary of Energy, through the Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy (or designee).
6. **Agency Responsible for Providing Necessary Support:** The DOE will provide financial and administrative support to the Committee. Within the Department, primary support shall be furnished by the Office of Fossil Energy.
7. **Estimated Annual Operating Costs in Dollars and Staff-years:** The estimated annual operating cost of direct support to the committee and its subcommittees is \$35,000; one-eighth staff person per year.
8. **Designated Federal Officer:** A full-time or permanent part-time DOE employee, appointed in accordance with agency procedures, will serve as the Designated Federal Officer (DFO) (or designee). The DFO or designee will approve or call all of the advisory committee's and subcommittee's meetings, and prepare and approve all meeting agendas, attend all committee and subcommittee meetings, and adjourn any meeting when the DFO determines adjournment to be in the public interest. The Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oil and Natural Gas will be the DFO.
9. **Estimated Number and Frequency of Meetings:** The Committee expects to meet in-person approximately once per year. Meetings may occur as frequently as needed and approved by the DFO.

10. **Duration:** Continuing in nature.

11. **Committee Termination Date:** The Committee terminates 2 years from the Charter filing date, and may not meet if the Charter is not renewed biannually.

12. **Membership and Designation:** The Committee will be comprised of approximately 15 Committee members with knowledge and expertise in the natural gas hydrate field. Members shall be appointed by the Secretary, representing industrial enterprises, institutions of higher education, oceanographic institutions, State agencies, and environmental organizations. The members shall be experts in their respective fields and appointed as special Government employees, or representatives of entities, including, among others, the National Laboratories, State Governments, and environmental groups, should the Committee's tasks require such representation. The Committee shall designate a chairperson from among the members of the Committee. Members serve at the discretion of the Secretary.

Members of the Committee serve without compensation. However, each appointed member may be reimbursed for authorized per diem and travel expense incurred while attending Committee meetings in accordance with the Federal Travel Regulations.

13. **Subcommittees:** The DOE is authorized to form subcommittees. With DOE approval, the Committee chair may form subcommittees or working groups within the Committee to review specific issues consistent with this charter. The objectives of the subcommittees are to make recommendations to the parent Committee with respect to the particular matters related to the responsibilities of the parent Committee. Such subcommittees or workgroups may not work independently of the chartered committee and must report their recommendations and advice to the full Committee for full deliberation and discussion. Subcommittees or workgroups have no authority to make decisions on behalf of the chartered Committee, nor can they report directly to the DOE. Subcommittee members are appointed with DOE approval.

14. **Recordkeeping:** The records of the Committee and any subcommittees shall be handled in accordance with General Records Schedule 6.2 and DOE Administrative Records, Schedule 16, Item 8b (1.1) and approved agency records disposition schedule. These records shall be available for public inspection and copying, subject to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.

15. **Filing Date:**

Date filed with Congress: October 18, 2019



Rachael J. Beitler
Acting Committee Management Officer