

Biography

Spencer Abraham

Secretary, Department of Energy

Spencer Abraham became the nation's 10th Secretary of Energy on January 20, 2001. He leads a cabinet department with a \$21 billion budget and over 100,000 federal and contractor employees.

Under Secretary Abraham's leadership, the Department of Energy has pursued an ambitious agenda that strengthens America's energy and national security.

In the first week of the new Administration, President Bush appointed Secretary Abraham and other Cabinet-level officials to a task force that developed the first National Energy Policy in over a decade. Since the energy plan was released, Secretary Abraham has led the Administration's efforts to increase energy supply and conservation and energy efficiency, and is currently working to secure passage of a comprehensive energy bill.

One of the key components of the National Energy Policy was nuclear power, which provides 20 percent of the nation's electricity. After years of inaction and delay, Secretary Abraham recommended Yucca Mountain as the nation's first repository of nuclear fuel and nuclear waste, and that recommendation was approved by decisive bipartisan majorities in both the House and Senate. President Bush signed the resolution designating the Yucca Mountain Nuclear Waste Repository on July 23, 2002.

In January 2002, Secretary Abraham launched an aggressive new technology research program to develop the future of energy. Under this new FreedomCAR program, the government and the private sector will fund research into advanced, efficient fuel cell technology which uses hydrogen to power automobiles without creating any pollution. The long-term results of this cooperative effort will be cars and trucks that are more efficient, cheaper to operate, pollution-free and competitive in the showroom. This plan is rooted in President Bush's call, issued last May in our National Energy Plan, to reduce American reliance on foreign oil through a balance of new domestic energy production and new technology to promote greater energy efficiency. The Detroit News said FreedomCAR will transform the energy debate: "Just as Ronald Reagan changed the terms of the defense debate with his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), so the fuel-cell initiative of George Bush and Spencer Abraham may change the terms of debate over energy."

Secretary Abraham has also dramatically expanded the Department's role and focus on nuclear nonproliferation programs. During a November 2001 trip to Moscow, the Secretary and his Russian counterpart announced an agreement to significantly expand and accelerate nuclear nonproliferation work. In May 2002, during a Washington meeting with the Russians, Secretary Abraham announced the creation of a working group to

improve security of radiological sources. Washington Post columnist David Broder described these efforts to safeguard Russian nuclear materials as "great gifts to the nation from Abraham and others."

One of the most significant challenges facing the Department is its responsibility for the environmental cleanup of former federal atomic weapons facilities around the country. Secretary Abraham's Expedited Cleanup Initiative represents the most ambitious overhaul ever sought of this \$7 billion a year program. The initiative will dramatically increase funding to those sites that agree to expedite cleanup.

As the leader of one of the federal government's largest agencies, Secretary Abraham is also its top manager. After becoming Secretary, he instituted a series of key management reforms that have made DOE one of the most effective agencies in the federal government. The Mercatus Center audit of federal agency performance reports for 2001 ranked DOE 4th out of all federal agencies for top performance. In the previous year, DOE was ranked 10th.

Under Secretary Abraham's leadership, every DOE program has conducted top-to-bottom reviews of their spending priorities and established new blueprints for the future. The reform plan is not just about controlling spending and bureaucracy, but about managing programs effectively.

Prior to becoming Secretary of Energy, Mr. Abraham served as a United States Senator from Michigan from 1995-2001 where he was the author of 22 pieces of legislation signed into law - an unprecedented accomplishment for a freshman Senator. Before his election to the Senate, Abraham served as co-chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC) from 1991 to 1993. He was also Chairman of the Michigan Republican Party from 1983-1990 and Deputy Chief of Staff to Vice President Dan Quayle from 1990 to 1991.

Spencer Abraham and his wife, Jane, have three children. He is a native of Lansing, Michigan and a graduate of the Harvard University School of Law and Michigan State University.