ENERGY SCIENCES COALITION

Statement on the Department of Energy Provisions in Title V and Title VI of H.R. 1806, the America COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2015
April 21, 2015

The organizations represented by the Energy Sciences Coalition (ESC) credit the House Science, Space and Technology Committee for its efforts crafting H.R. 1806, the American COMPETES Reauthorization Act of 2015, introduced by Chairman Lamar Smith (R-TX). Given the challenges of the discretionary spending caps set by the Budget Control Act and current House rules, we realize the Committee's actions are circumscribed. The ESC appreciates the overall increase in funding authorized for the Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Science in FY16. Increased investment in federal research supported by the Office of Science is critical to solving the economic challenges we face and vital to ensuring our future national energy security. One compelling example of this is the growth in demand for access to DOE's scientific user facilities by academia and a broad cross-section of industry. However, the ESC is concerned about the cuts proposed for certain programs within the Department of Energy, and the flat funding provided in FY17 when overall non-defense funding will increase by over 2 percent even under the tight budget caps. These reductions and the flat funding authorized by the bill in FY17 are inconsistent with the *Guiding Principles for the America COMPETES Act Reauthorization* endorsed by the ESC in 2013.

In particular, the ESC is concerned about the 7% reduction proposed for the Biological and Environmental Research (BER) program within the Office of Science. The entire BER research portfolio is important to developing the scientific and technological solutions central to the Department of Energy's mission, starting with basic microbial research for energy purposes and leading to the development of advanced and cost effective biofuels, biofeedstocks for energy, and bio-based products from non-food and waste biomass. Also, BER develops biological tools for environmental cleanup of contamination from energy production and DOE legacy weapons programs, and is critical to understanding, modeling, and predicting the earth's climate and the associated impacts of energy production and use. With respect to policy issues, the ESC is concerned about the provision prioritizing biological and genomics science conducted by BER over environmental science because they are inextricably linked. And the provision preventing BER from conducting research identified as "overlapping or duplicative" would negatively impact interagency research efforts in areas such as climate science, which may be viewed as overlapping when they are actually complementary.

In addition, many coalition members are concerned about the 50% cut to the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Energy (ARPA-E) and the 29% cut to Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) programs. Among other policy provisions of concern are those eliminating research aimed at "reductions of energy-related emissions, including greenhouse gases" from the existing goals of ARPA-E, and limiting how scientific information developed or funded by DOE can be used in formulating federal regulations.

As the bill moves forward, the ESC hopes that the strong support for the Office of Science can be further increased. At the same time, the ESC hopes the significant cuts to other important DOE high-risk, high-reward and applied energy programs, as well as additional policy concerns in the bill, can be addressed in ways consistent with the *Guiding Principles* document, which will enable the ESC and its members to endorse the legislation.

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The Energy Sciences Coalition (ESC) is a broad based coalition of organizations representing scientists, engineers and mathematicians in universities, industry and national laboratories who are committed to supporting and advancing the scientific research programs of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and in particular, the DOE Office of Science.