



April 30, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray  
 Chair  
 Energy & Water Development  
 Senate Appropriations Committee  
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Kennedy  
 Ranking Member  
 Energy & Water Development  
 Senate Appropriations Committee  
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann  
 Chair  
 Energy & Water Development  
 House Appropriations Committee  
 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur  
 Ranking Member  
 Energy & Water Development  
 House Appropriations Committee  
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Ranking Member Kennedy, Chair Fleischmann, and Ranking Member Kaptur,

As companies and organizations committed to building America's clean energy future, we write to request that Fiscal Year 2025 Energy and Water Appropriations provide robust funding for electric transmission deployment and research through the Department of Energy's (DOE) Grid Deployment Office (GDO), Office of Electricity (OE), and Loan Programs Office (LPO).

Upgrading and expanding the nation's electricity transmission network is a critical national priority that has taken on new immediacy. For the first time in two decades, demand for electricity is rising.<sup>i</sup> The causes of this trend align with several potent drivers of the U.S. economy, including supporting digital infrastructure, expanding U.S. manufacturing, and increasing electrification of sectors such as transportation and others. All of these trends are net positives for U.S. economic and national security and prosperity, but they all require greater access to low-cost and reliable electricity.

For example, as more and more activities and sectors that drive our economic prosperity digitize, the data-center share of electricity demand alone is expected to triple by 2030, an amount roughly equivalent to the annual usage of 40 million homes.<sup>ii</sup> Capacity exists to support this increasing demand and with the right investments can be brought online quickly. For example, today's aging grid has contributed to a backlog of clean energy projects in regional interconnection queues totaling over 2.5 million megawatts in nameplate capacity.<sup>iii</sup>

A robust and secure 21st century transmission network is also imperative to national security. During Winter Storm Uri, approximately 700 Department of Defense installations were damaged across Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Louisiana and, in Texas, 12 of the state's 15 military bases lost power<sup>iv</sup>—which cost one base the equivalent of its energy bill for the entire previous year in a single month.<sup>v</sup> Reports of a sharp uptick in direct cyber and physical attacks on the grid further underscore the need to fortify our transmission infrastructure.<sup>vi</sup>

Transmission investments that support a more resilient system will also protect the lives and earnings of everyday civilians. For example, adding one gigawatt of interregional transmission capacity between the Southeast U.S. and Texas grid (ERCOT) would have saved consumers nearly \$100 million over the course of Winter Storm Elliott in 2022.<sup>vii</sup> Power flowing in the opposite direction from the same line would have provided roughly \$1 billion in the case of Winter Storm Uri.<sup>viii</sup>

Given that such funding is critical to unleashing domestic clean energy resources, safeguarding against emerging threats, catalyzing billions in private capital investment, creating thousands of good-paying jobs, and delivering low-cost energy to families and businesses, we encourage the Subcommittee to consider the following:

- **Funding for the GDO:** The GDO serves as the catalyst for the development of new and upgraded high-capacity electric transmission lines. We support investing no less than \$101.87 million in FY25 funding for the GDO to alleviate the planning, permitting, and paying challenges of these vital projects, including via designation of National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors (NIETC). We further encourage the Subcommittee to include report language urging the DOE to issue a preliminary list of potential NIETC designations as soon as practicable, adopting one or more routes that address interregional needs.

- **Additional Borrowing Authority for the Transmission Facilitation Program (TFP):** The TFP was funded at \$2.5 billion under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) to accelerate the buildout of large-scale, high-voltage transmission projects. Under this revolving fund program, DOE targets shovel-ready projects and acts as an anchor tenant by purchasing capacity on a line until generation appears. Such arrangements can help these lines overcome the immediate financial hurdles to construction with the promise of far greater returns over their lifespan. We are requesting an additional \$5 billion for TFP, including the \$750 million authorized by IIJA for FY25, to enable more long-haul projects.
- **Funding for the OE:** The OE provides national leadership to strengthen and enhance the largest electricity delivery system in the world. As the office responsible for the cyber and physical security of U.S. energy infrastructure, the OE oversees the Department’s research, development, and demonstration programs in partnership with local, state, and regional officials to keep essential services running. We urge the Subcommittee to support no less than \$293 million in FY25 funding for the OE. In particular, we support efforts to improve the availability and affordability of high-voltage direct-current (HVDC) technology, which can serve as jumper cables for the grid after a blackout.
- **Funding for the LPO:** The LPO offers debt financing for large-scale transmission projects and other high-impact commercial energy infrastructure through authorities such as the Title 17 Innovative Technology Loan Guarantee Program and Energy Infrastructure Reinvestment Program. To scale the flexible capital necessary for widespread deployment of new and improved transmission technologies, we urge the Subcommittee to support no less than \$55 million in FY25 funding for Title 17 administrative expenses.

As DOE’s National Renewable Energy Laboratory has estimated, the accelerated deployment of clean energy projects supported by these activities will require over 1.6 million new jobs by 2030, and opportunities exist in all 50 states.<sup>ix</sup> In keeping with the ideals of a just and equitable transition, we are committed to ensuring that this funding leaves no community behind. To that end, we seek the Subcommittee members’ support for prioritizing workforce development, which is a cornerstone of America’s clean energy economy.

These investments in grid infrastructure will be essential moving forward. We thank you for your consideration and hope that you will support transmission in the Fiscal Year 2025 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill.

Sincerely,

Advanced Energy United  
 Advanced Power Alliance  
 Advancing Modern Powerlines (AMP) Coalition  
 Alliance for Clean Energy New York  
 American Clean Power Association  
 American Council on Renewable Energy  
 Business Council for Sustainable Energy  
 Berkshire Hathaway Energy  
 Ceres  
 Clean Energy Buyers Association  
 Clean Grid Alliance

Conservative Energy Network  
CTC Global  
EarthGrid  
Grid Action  
Grid United  
Hannon Armstrong Sustainable Infrastructure  
Innergex  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers  
Local Unit 1245  
Interwest Energy Alliance  
Invenergy LLC  
League of Conservation Voters  
Longroad Energy  
MAREC Action  
National Electrical Manufacturers Association  
National Wildlife Federation  
Natural Resources Defense Council  
NextEra Energy Transmission  
Niskanen Center  
Oceantic Network  
Onward Energy  
RENEW Northeast  
Renewable Northwest  
Pattern Energy  
Sierra Club  
Silicon Valley Leadership Group  
Solar Energy Industries Association  
Sol Systems  
Southern Renewable Energy Association  
SouthWestern Power Group  
Third Way  
VEIR, Inc.  
Working for Advanced Transmission Technologies (WATT) Coalition

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<sup>i</sup> <https://gridstrategiesllc.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/National-Load-Growth-Report-2023.pdf>.

<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/impact-genai-electricity-how-fueling-data-center-boom-vivian-lee/>.

<sup>iii</sup> <https://emp.lbl.gov/queues>.

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.stripes.com/opinion/2023-12-18/us-electric-grid-capacity-12398317.html>.

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.airforcetimes.com/news/pentagon-congress/2021/03/27/winter-storm-uri-spotlights-gaps-in-military-base-preparedness/>.

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.eenews.net/articles/tensions-at-home-and-abroad-pose-growing-threat-to-us-grid/>.

<sup>vii</sup> <https://acore.org/news/communities-could-have-saved-nearly-100m-kept-lights-on-during-winter-storm-elliott-by-adding-transmission/>.

<sup>viii</sup> <https://acore.org/news/more-interregional-transmission-could-have-saved-nearly-1-billion-preserved-power-for-200000-homes-during-texas-freeze/>.

<sup>ix</sup> <https://www.nrel.gov/state-local-tribal/state-employment-projection-support.html>.