

## **Committee on Energy and Commerce**

### **Opening Statement**

**of**

### **Subcommittee on Energy Ranking Member Bobby Rush**

#### ***DOE Modernization: Advancing DOE's Mission for National, Economic, and Energy Security of the United States***

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this important hearing on modernizing the Department of Energy.

Mr. Chairman, for constituents such as those I represent, one of the most pressing issues regarding DOE involves the matter of ensuring that the agency is representative of all communities and the needs of all citizens are being addressed.

Through its energy policies and initiatives, including the loan and grant programs, as well as through engagement at the National Labs and access to contracting and vendor opportunities, many of my constituents are constantly seeking ways to break into what has essentially become a type of good ole boys network.

As you are aware, Mr. Chairman, my office worked extensively with former Secretary Moniz to establish the Minorities in Energy Initiative, which was designed to help foster increased minority participation in all sectors of the energy industry.

This initiative was successful in beginning the process of raising awareness and engagement between DOE, industry, and minority communities.

However, Secretary Perry did not seem to even be aware of the program and many of the activities that were established by this initiative seemed to have tapered off.

Mr. Chairman, as we go through this process of modernizing the department, it is imperative that we examine the leadership profile of the agency and work to ensure that there is diversity at the top where most of the decisions and policies are first enacted.

We need more people of color in the top echelons of the department from the Secretary's office, as well as in the Office of Science, which directs billions of research dollars to higher education institutions.

We need more diversity of people and thought on the Review Boards and the Boards and Council, which are responsible for making key decisions regarding the National Labs among other issues.

Mr. Chairman, when it comes to the National Labs, we need to more women and people of color running these institutions so that decisions regarding increased inclusion and diversity are made inherently, and not simply as an afterthought or as a checklist or as empty, token acts.

Additionally, Mr. Chairman, we need to ensure that the Senior Executive Staff, or the SES, who play pivotal roles in running the department and making important decisions regarding the agency's policies and priorities also include men and women of color.

Mr. Chairman, it is easy to overlook the importance of these issues if you are not among the groups that have historically been excluded.

But when we are using taxpayer money to fund the labs, or to dole out loans and grants to the same schools and universities, or to provide millions of dollars to contractors and vendors, then it must be incumbent upon us policymakers here in Congress to ensure that everyone is given the same opportunity to share in the wealth and resources.

So Mr. Chairman, I look forward to working with Mr. Barton as well as other members of this Subcommittee to restructure the DOE in a way that addresses the systemic and institutional discrepancies that exist in the agency today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and with that I yield back the balance of my time.