

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 17, 2025

The Honorable Christopher Wright
Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Secretary Wright:

We write with outrage over the Department of Energy's (DOE) decision to move forward with reductions in force (RIFs) across critical program offices during the government shutdown in a clear act of political retribution that will hurt communities across the country. These actions, which reportedly affect 179 employees, appear to be part of a broader effort to implement the administration's budget request without congressional approval—circumventing the appropriations process and undermining congressional intent. The Department's actions will raise energy prices for American families by disrupting the implementation of key programs that increase supply and reduce costs for hard-working Americans. We are also alarmed by how your mass firings might allow waste, fraud, and abuse as you eliminate key staff conducting oversight of programs.

The Department has refused to provide information about the specific distribution of RIFs across affected offices, which include the Offices of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), State and Community Energy Programs (SCEP), and Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED). We understand that employees have been notified of impending terminations with no set date, creating confusion and uncertainty throughout the Department. Further, a U.S. District Court recently temporarily halted RIFs across federal agencies, finding they will likely be determined to be illegal.

These RIFs would effectively dismantle the very offices responsible for lowering energy costs for American families and communities. Eliminating staff in SCEP jeopardizes work to distribute \$366 million annually through the Weatherization Assistance Program—saving households an average of \$372 per year—and \$105 million annually through state and community programs, which cut costs through renewable energy and efficiency upgrades. Similarly, the mass firings at EERE would end research and deployment programs in solar, wind, and hydrogen technologies

that make clean energy more affordable and reliable, strengthen domestic supply chains, and reduce long-term energy costs for consumers nationwide.

Recent reports from the DOE Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office have identified persistent gaps in program oversight and have recommended increased monitoring and staffing to ensure proper stewardship of federal funds. These RIFs would directly undermine those recommendations—eliminating institutional knowledge and capacity at a time when stronger oversight is clearly needed. With fewer career oversight and program management staff, the Department risks weaker grant monitoring, delayed audits, reduced ability to detect misconduct, and diminished follow-through on corrective actions.

Compounding these concerns, OCED and SCEP are responsible for implementing and overseeing billions of dollars in Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act funds—funds that support demonstration projects, state energy programs, and community-level deployments. It is unclear who would manage these programs and carry out required monitoring and compliance functions if these RIFs proceed—further heightening the risk of inadequate oversight and mismanagement.

We demand you immediately halt all RIF actions and provide the Committee with detailed information about the scope, timing, and justification of these reductions. Please provide DOE's plan for implementing and overseeing the programs managed by these offices, as well as details on how DOE plans to implement the court order.

DOE should be advancing America's clean energy future and reducing energy costs for consumers—not dismantling the offices that make it possible. We look forward to your responses by October 23, 2025.

Sincerely,



Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
House Committee on Appropriations



Patty Murray
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Senate Committee on Appropriations