

**Statement of the Honorable LaDoris Harris**  
**Director of the Office of Economic Impact and Diversity**  
**U.S. Department of Energy**  
before the  
**Subcommittee on Energy and Power**  
**Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
*21st Century Energy Workforce Development Jobs Initiative Act of 2014*  
**September 17, 2014**

Thank you Chairman Whitfield, Ranking Member Rush, and distinguished members of the Committee. I am pleased to come before you today to discuss the status of the Department of Energy's (DOE) Minorities in Energy Initiative (MIE) and workforce development initiatives.

**Office of Economic Impact and Diversity**

The Office of Economic Impact and Diversity at the Department of Energy was established in 1979, with the Director appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate, to advise the Secretary on the impact of energy policies, regulations, and other actions of the Department on minorities and minority business enterprises to ensure minorities can participate fully in the Department's energy programs. The policy includes assurance that DOE can provide minorities with information, technical assistance, support programs, loans, business analysis, and targeted outreach.

**Minorities in Energy Initiative**

In 2013, Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz launched the Department of Energy's Minorities in Energy Initiative (MIE) to increase the engagement of minority communities in the energy sector. Because of ED's congressional mandate and successful history working with minority communities, Secretary Moniz tasked it with leading the MIE. The initiative is a public-private collaboration aimed at increasing minority participation in the energy sector through engagement in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education and workforce development, energy economic development and climate change. Through outreach, industry partnerships, and energy industry data analysis, MIE seeks to harness the richness of America's diversity to develop and sustain talent, stimulate innovation, and support economic and national security.

The timing for such an initiative could not have been better - energy is the third largest industry in the U.S., and it is growing rapidly. Our country is undergoing an energy revolution spurred by new technology in fossil fuel recovery, renewable energy generation and changing use patterns. Our aging infrastructure must be modernized to allow for new fuel sources and technologies to come on-line. The government and private sector are poised to make large investments in energy efficiency and make our infrastructure more resilient to climate change and the other risks we face.

MIE will empower and prepare businesses, communities, schools, and individuals to benefit from the technical, financial assistance, workforce, and energy literacy resources of the Department and the overall energy sector.

Through this initiative, the Department now has a sustainable platform to convene minority and tribal communities to discuss energy challenges and seek solutions. We work to fully engage our communities on energy policies that affect them and expand opportunities for minority workers and businesses in the energy sector.

We have over 30 Minorities in Energy Ambassadors, national leaders chosen by DOE leadership for their work in STEM education, energy economic development, and climate change. The Ambassadors work with the Department to advance the goals of the program. They understand what the future of energy can mean for minority communities in terms of better jobs, better education, greater national security and a cleaner planet for future generations.

These leaders include Ranking Member Bobby Rush, Senators Mary Landrieu and Lisa Murkowski, Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson, Congressman Joe Garcia, American Petroleum Institute President Jack Gerard, venture capitalist Carmichael Roberts, Haskell Indian Nations University Professor Dr. Daniel Wildcat, former EPA Administrator and New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman, AREVA President and CEO Gary Mignogna, University of Maryland Baltimore County President Freeman Hrabowski, and former Secretaries of Energy Hazel O'Leary and Bill Richardson. With their support, we are moving the needle on the energy challenges and economic opportunities before us.

## **STEM Education & Workforce Development**

Changing demographic trends require that a national effort to strengthen the STEM workforce must draw on the minds and talents of all Americans, including underrepresented minorities in STEM. The MIE STEM education and workforce development goal is to establish and implement a framework for achieving growth of minority participation in the energy sector through enhanced public awareness of energy-related careers and the promotion of both STEM education and workforce development paths to meet the full-range of energy sector employment across all skill areas.

The MIE Initiative strategically aligns with the Federal STEM Education 5-Year Plan and the Obama Administration's My Brother's Keeper Initiative by working to better serve groups historically underrepresented in STEM fields, closing opportunity gaps faced by young people of color and highlighting energy sector career opportunities for minority communities. DOE coordinates also its STEM education and workforce development activities with federal partners like the Office of Science and Technology Policy, Department of Commerce, USAID, Department of Education, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Increasing the participation and success of minorities in STEM contributes to the health of the nation by expanding the STEM talent pool, enhancing innovation, and improving the nation's global economic leadership. The groups that are the most underrepresented in STEM fields are also the fastest growing in the general population. By 2043, no single group will make up a majority of Americans. In about five years, minority children will comprise more than half of the

children under 18 years old in the United States. Today, minority children under three years old are already the majority.

Fully engaging the diversity of our nation will allow us to build a STEM workforce that can create jobs and wealth, and address the energy challenges facing our nation. We need to take an all-hands-on-deck approach to STEM education—training educators in these subject areas to prepare students for higher paying and highly rewarding careers in STEM fields.

Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) serve as important resources to educate and train a significant portion of America's future STEM workforce. In addition to four-year colleges and universities, two-year colleges can also provide resources for workforce development for energy sector careers.

An example of the synergy of STEM education and workforce development is our active involvement in the Energize America roundtable series. Energize America is a series of workforce development summits focused on job readiness and industry needs in cities across the country. The American Petroleum Institute, whose President Jack Gerard is one of our MIE Ambassadors, sponsors Energize America in collaboration with the American Association of Blacks in Energy and Hispanics in Energy. The Department participates in the Energize America series by sharing information opportunities in energy sector opportunities across the DOE complex, from jobs and training to internships and funding resources.

Congressman Rush spoke at the first summit, Energize Chicago, earlier this year, about energy sector opportunities for his community. Over the course of the year, we've participated in Energize events in Bakersfield, Philadelphia, Las Cruces, Denver, and Canton. Energize Detroit and Energize Charlotte will round out the series for this year. Participants have included former Interior Secretary Ken Salazar, senior representatives of national labs, representatives from energy companies, community organizations, local elected officials, citizens, utilities, universities, trade schools and our Minorities in Energy Ambassadors. All of these events are free and open to the public.

The Department of Energy is also collaborating with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on the STEM Education, Economic Development or SEED Initiative. This innovative place-based program, together with additional input from the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor, creates economic opportunity and energy-literate communities of public housing residents around the country. The first SEED planning session will be in Denver, Colorado in October with DOE, HUD, Denver Public Housing Authority, Denver Urban League and the Mayor's office.

### **Energy Economic Development**

Globally, energy is a \$6 trillion industry that encompasses diverse energy sources and uses. Given the shifting energy supply and demand patterns, both domestically and abroad, and the rapid pace of innovation in energy technologies, the importance of increasing minority participation in the energy sector is paramount. The MIE energy economic development goal is to establish and implement an energy economic development framework for increased minority business growth, participation in innovation and commercialization, access to capital, and

investment in the energy sector, including energy production and distribution, manufacturing, and energy efficiency.

The spirit of entrepreneurship is spreading in this country, and some of the most significant opportunities are in the growing energy sector. The Department's initiatives are aligned with President Obama's all-of-the-above energy strategy.

The DOE ED entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Development Agency in 2013 aimed at increasing the participation of minority business enterprises in energy – one of the largest growth industries in the U.S. This collaborative work supports the President's plan to develop and secure America's energy resources. In 2013, DOE also created the Office of Minority Business and Economic Development to increase awareness on market trends and opportunities and to expand technical assistance to minority businesses in the energy sector, including minority-women owned businesses.

DOE also provides funding, business and research opportunities that minority businesses will be able to access. These opportunities include the Small Business and Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer (SBIR/ STTR) program to increase the diversity of our applicant pool, focusing on Women- Owned and Minority-Owned small business concerns. This program is designed to support small U.S. businesses doing innovative research to design, scale up, and commercialize their technology through grants and expert support.

The Advanced Research Project Agency-Energy (ARPA-E) advances high-potential, high-impact energy technologies that are too early for private-sector investment. ARPA-E awardees are unique because they are developing entirely new ways to generate, store, and use energy. ARPA-E projects have the potential to radically improve U.S. economic prosperity, national security, and environmental well-being. Minority businesses and researchers have the opportunity to apply for an ARPA-E grant to further develop their innovative technology.

DOE's Clean Energy Manufacturing Initiative offers federal resources to help innovators design, scale up, and commercialize their technology. The DOE Loan Program enables DOE to work with private companies and lenders to mitigate the financing risks associated with clean energy projects, and thereby encourage development on a broader and much-needed scale.

## **Climate Change**

Climate change presents a key challenge and opportunity for the energy sector. The MIE is focused on engaging minority and tribal communities in policy development and technological solutions to advance climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Aligned with President Obama's Climate Action Plan, the MIE supports efforts to invest in clean energy technologies to protect current and future generations of Americans, and to create new jobs and industries to keep America on the cutting edge and prepare communities for the impacts of climate change.

Innovation and utilization of clean energy provides an opportunity to engage minority businesses in our broader efforts to reduce carbon pollution and prepare the Nation for the impacts of climate change. And investments in homegrown clean energy will help create good paying jobs that cannot be shipped overseas.

## **Conclusion**

MIE is a sustainable platform and nation-wide initiative to increase minority participation in the energy sector, STEM education, workforce development, energy economic development, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Looking to the future, DOE is committed to helping develop America's next generation of STEM leaders and innovators. America's ability to meet the challenges and achieve the opportunities of our time depends in large measure on a diverse and robust energy sector. Increasing the participation of minorities in the energy sector contributes to the health of our nation by: expanding the talent pool, enhancing innovation, and improving the nation's global economic leadership. The diversity of American higher education institutions is a competitive advantage in the global knowledge economy.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to testify before your Committee today. The Department appreciates the leadership of this Committee on engaging minorities in the energy sector, including the recent introduction of the "21st Energy Workforce Development Jobs Initiative Act of 2014." I look forward to continuing to work with the Committee on engaging more minorities in the energy sector.