

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

2321 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6301

(202) 225-6375

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January 18, 2019

The Honorable Rick Perry  
Secretary of Energy  
U.S. Department of Energy  
1000 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. ZIP 20585

Dear Secretary Perry,

I am writing to you today to request information related to restrictions placed on Department of Energy (DOE) employees' federally sponsored travel. The partial federal shutdown began 28 days ago, on Saturday, December 22, 2018. However, DOE is not impacted by the shutdown and based on the information available to me thus far, these travel restrictions seem arbitrary and capricious. I am especially concerned that these restrictions are having an untoward impact on the ability of your department to carry out its critical missions.

As you know, last September, the Department received more than \$35 billion to carry out its Congressionally mandated duties for the full Fiscal Year 2019 under the terms of the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2019 (Division A of P.L. 115-244).

However, my Committee staff has received reports that many DOE employees were ordered to cancel upcoming DOE-sponsored travel immediately, and without sufficient explanation. Recent press accounts corroborate these reports, stating "DOE officials directed all federal employees, fellows and contractors within the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy to cancel travel for the next two months. Some workers at the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy reported similar guidance because of the government shutdown."<sup>1</sup> Employee travel is routinely used to build and maintain relationships and knowledge with key colleagues and partners, a particularly important objective considering DOE's broad geographic presence. So

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<sup>1</sup> E&E News Staff, "'It's crazy': Confusion, travel bans plague agencies," *E&E News*, January 10, 2019, accessed here: <https://www.eenews.net/greenwire/2019/01/10/stories/1060111597>

given its appropriated budget, I would like a clear explanation for why DOE may be restricting its employees' travel without any clear justification for these actions.

I sincerely hope that these reports are inaccurate. DOE's effectiveness is vital to ensuring our nation's security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental, and nuclear security missions, particularly through the development of transformative science and technology solutions.

Please respond to this letter no later than January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Specifically, I would like answers to the following questions:

- Are any DOE programs currently subject to any new restrictions of federally-sponsored travel following the beginning of the current shutdown of other federal agencies on December 22, 2018?
- If so, which programs are subject to these restrictions, and are there any plans for how potential savings of federal funds from these travel restrictions will be used?
- Please also include copies of any records, including memorandums or guidance documents regarding restrictions on DOE travel that were written or produced after the partial federal shutdown began on December 22, 2018.

If you have any questions about this request, please feel free to contact Adam Rosenberg, Staff Director, Subcommittee on Energy at (202) 225-7255.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

cc: Rep. Frank Lucas, Ranking Member, Committee on Science, Space and Technology