



April 13, 2020

The Honorable Eddie Bernice Johnson
Chairwoman
Committee on Science, Space, & Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Frank Lucas
Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space, & Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Johnson and Ranking Member Lucas:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on provisions to include in future near-term and long-term economic stimulus packages developed to address and mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. We respectfully request that you increase funding levels, expand authority, and, in some cases, reauthorize the following critical programs to bolster our economy, improve public health, and revive our workforce.

Clean energy and energy efficiency research, development, demonstration, and deployment programs

Clean energy, electric heating and cooking, and energy efficiency technologies not only have a proven track record of generating positive environmental outcomes and creating jobs, but also directly combat the public health and economic crises that are weighing on American families and businesses during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the Department of Energy (DOE) [internal evaluation](#) of the Weatherization Assistance Program during the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) showed that building retrofit projects saved families an average of \$300 per year on their energy bills and generated thousands of dollars in lifetime health benefits per home—all while creating tens of thousands of jobs. The Committee should:

- Extend and expand tax credits for solar, on-shore and offshore wind, electric vehicles, energy storage, and energy efficiency (as indicated in the Schumer-Wyden amendment to the American Energy Innovation Act).
- Increase funding for the DOE State Energy Program (SEP) to at least \$3.7 billion and funding for DOE’s Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant program to at least \$3.8 billion. This is roughly equivalent to these two programs’ funding levels under ARRA (\$3.1 billion and \$3.2 billion, respectively, adjusted for inflation).
- Increase funding for weatherization across DOE’s Weatherization Assistance Program and LIHEAP to at least \$10 billion, with an expansion of authority to include clean distributed energy resources such as rooftop solar and energy storage, as well as switching to electric cooking and water and space heating, thereby maximizing public health benefits and savings for consumers.

- Double appropriations for existing clean energy programs, with a mandate to deploy all funds within two years. This is the fastest way to inject funds into the innovation ecosystem and would minimize the burden of standing up a new program.
- Appropriate an additional \$3 billion credit subsidy for the existing Title 1703 Innovative Energy Loan Guarantee Program.
- Expand funding for existing vehicles technologies and clean fuels programs, including DOE's Vehicle Technologies and Fuel Cell Technologies Offices and Federal Aviation Administration's Continuous Lower Energy, Emissions, and Noise (CLEEN) program for aviation, and expand the scope of the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing (ATVM) loan program to explicitly include medium- and heavy-duty vehicles and key component manufacturers.
- Provide authorization and funding for DOE to launch a pilot program to help school districts purchase zero-emission, electric school buses, along with the accompanying charging infrastructure. Preference should be given to projects in low-income areas and to projects that include interconnection with the electric grid for storage, load-balancing, etc. This proposal reflects ideas proposed in the Clean School Bus Act.
- Provide an option for no-cost extensions of all existing federal grants and prize competitions that are suspended during the COVID-19 crisis. Many federal grant recipients are unable to complete their projects at this time due to voluntary and mandatory business closures.
- Reinstate the ARRA-era 1603 program for payments in lieu of tax credits for energy property.
- Reauthorize DOE's Smart Grid Investment Grant program (SGIG) at \$10 billion over five years to provide federal grants for utilities, regional transmission organizations, and other electric entities to invest in grid modernization. The authorization should provide preference for distributed energy resources (DERs) integration. Under ARRA, \$3 billion in public and matching private smart grid investments from 2009 to 2012 [generated](#) \$6.8 billion in economic output and nearly 50,000 full-time jobs.

Electric vehicle infrastructure programs

To aid in economic recovery, the Committee should also invest in national electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, which will put tens of thousands of Americans back to work; reduce pollution from cars, buses, and trucks that disproportionately burden low-income and minority communities and [amplify the effects of COVID-19](#); and combat climate change. The Committee should increase funding for EV infrastructure through the State Energy Program and DOE's Clean Cities program, with special funding for public transit hubs, such as rest stops, ports, and municipal depots. All such programs should also provide additional support for grid interconnection and charging infrastructure connected to renewable power or energy storage.

Clean domestic manufacturing programs

Last fall, your Committee saw the introduction of the Clean Industrial Technology Act of 2019 (H.R.4230), which rightly recognized the need for a major investment in our country's clean manufacturing capacity. As we help American manufacturers get back on their feet, we should ensure our investments not only rebuild domestic manufacturing but also combat climate change and prepare American businesses to capitalize on increased demand for clean industrial products, renewable energy, and energy-efficient materials. We respectfully urge the Committee to reinstate the Section 48C Advanced Manufacturing Tax Credit at \$3 billion; reinstate Section 45M Energy Efficient Appliance

Credit; and pass the Clean Industrial Technologies Act with no less than \$650 million in funding for demonstration projects—the funding level in the original bill. Additionally, the Committee should offer preference or a purchase premium for low-carbon industrial products in all federal procurement spending as part of a COVID stimulus, to incentivize a transition to clean manufacturing and to ensure that COVID recovery does not simultaneously exacerbate the climate challenge.

Relief for essential public transit services

Public transit authorities are among the industries most harmed by COVID-19. [Transit Center](#) estimates that agencies could see an annual shortfall of \$26-28 billion due to social distancing measures. Mass transit is one of the most powerful tools for decarbonization, and the bankruptcy of public transit authorities would be a disaster for our climate, economy, workers, and the ability to combat public health threats like COVID-19 (according to a recent study, 2.8 million essential workers rely on public transit to get to their [life-saving work](#)). While perhaps not directly within your jurisdiction, we urge the Committee to consider any and all measures to ensure the solvency of America's public transit authorities. For instance, it is in the best interest of public health, the climate, and economic recovery that any Highway Trust Fund transfers for COVID-19 stimulus include 50-50 parity between the Highway Account and the Mass Transit Account.

Immediate financial support for graduate students working on STEM Projects

According to the 2018 report on Science & Engineering Indicators, there were at least 668,000 science and engineering graduate students in the US as of 2015. Across the United States, institutes of higher education have closed campuses to reduce the spread of Covid-19; importantly, these closures include laboratory spaces and access to vital equipment. Seemingly overnight, our next generation of scientists and researchers faces uncertain futures as students' education and projects have been put on hold indefinitely.

EDF respectfully requests \$300 million in funding to immediately support and extend graduate student salaries and project funding related to ongoing STEM projects at federal academic research/scientific funding agencies. These include, but are not limited to the National Science Foundation, National Institute of Health, Department of Energy, Department of Defense, Department of Agriculture, and Environmental Protection Agency. Achieving the scope and deliverables written into currently federally funded grants sponsored by federal agencies relies on the activities and outputs of these graduate researchers. Extending the employment of graduate research assistants to staff and operate the research facilities requires increasing financial commitments to each individually funded grant. Currently, these funds are not directly available. This requested funding will enable the successful achievement of objectives of currently funded grants, the seamless reestablishment of American research activity, and the training and development of future science professionals and leaders.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Gore
Senior Vice President, Political Affairs