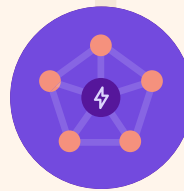


Re-Energizing America: An Action Plan for a DOE That Delivers

The United States faces a pivotal moment in energy history. Surging electricity demand, intensifying geopolitical volatility, global climate imperatives, and the rise of China as a technological rival make sustained federal leadership in energy innovation essential. The Department of Energy (DOE) is the cornerstone of the U.S. energy innovation ecosystem. Yet despite historic levels of funding authorized in recent years, DOE has chronically struggled to deploy dollars effectively, hampered by institutional fragmentation, outdated contracting infrastructure, and political churn that undermines long-term execution.

This Action Plan makes the case that funding alone is not enough. Congress can appropriate billions, but without a DOE that is operationally fit for purpose, those investments will not be able to successfully catalyze the development of new energy technologies. The reforms proposed here are practical changes that can be implemented now to unlock the full potential of federal energy innovation programs.






Together, these reforms will allow DOE to reach its full potential as an agency that reliably delivers outcomes for American innovators, taxpayers, and the nation's energy future.



The plan is organized around five strategic priorities:

- 1 Build a seamless innovation pipeline**
by empowering a permanent strategy office—such as the Office of Technology Commercialization—to own cross-departmental commercialization goals, and implementing shared KPIs and common frameworks to align offices around end-to-end outcomes for priority technology areas.
- 2 Improve program design agility** by matching funding mechanisms to program risk profiles, establishing a Program Design Center reporting to the Secretary, and creating a tiered approval structure that delegates authority to the appropriate level.
- 3 Modernize legal and contracting support** by appointing an Innovation Legal Advisor, building a dedicated contracting innovation team to develop reusable templates, deploying specialized contracting officers across field offices, and reforming career ladders to reward advanced expertise.
- 4 Align programs to industry needs** by creating a unified applicant portal, establishing navigator support for first-time applicants, reforming merit review timelines, and institutionalizing robust pre-solicitation industry engagement.
- 5 Enhance cross-program collaboration** by tying SES and GS-15 performance plans to cross-office coordination, harmonizing data standards, appointing single Selection Officials for joint programs, fencing cross-cut budget pools from annual pressures, and standardizing Small Business Innovation Research and Technology Commercialization Fund contributions department-wide.

Summary of Recommendations and Key Actors

 <p>1. Build a seamless innovation pipeline from research to deployment</p>	Set pragmatic goals based on realistic decadal targets for priority technology areas, and have a single permanent strategy office lead the effort, while coordinating with the relevant program offices.	DOE
	Empower the Office of Technology Commercialization to be an internal hub for a common innovation framework.	DOE, with sufficient Congressional appropriations
	Implement shared KPIs, tools, and common language across offices to drive behavior change and improve TRL/ARL handoffs.	DOE
 <p>2. Improve agility in program design and funding mechanisms</p>	Expand the use of agile funding mechanisms, and match the funding instrument to program objectives and level of risk.	DOE, with flexible authority from Congress
	Establish a Program Design Center that reports directly to the Secretary.	DOE, could be authorized and funded by Congress
	Create a tiered approval approach.	DOE, with buy-in from the White House
 <p>3. Modernize legal and contracting support for innovation</p>	Appoint an "Innovation Legal Advisor" to diagnose and solve legal and contractual barriers to DOE's innovation and commercialization mission.	DOE
	Create a legal & contracting innovation team.	DOE
	Create a mobile cohort of specialized contracting officers.	DOE
	Reform contracting and legal career ladders and incentives.	DOE, with flexible authority from Congress
 <p>4. Align programs to industry and innovator needs</p>	Create a "front door" of DOE to prioritize accessibility and expand the applicant pool.	DOE
	Design programs with first-time applicants in mind.	DOE, new recurring opportunities may need Congressional authority and funding
	Leverage intentional external engagement to adapt program design to industry needs, build trust, and attract high-quality applications.	DOE
	Reform merit review and negotiation processes for faster execution, lower burden, and increased transparency.	DOE
	Expand access to national laboratory resources.	DOE
 <p>5. Enhance cross-program collaboration</p>	Align individual and office-level incentives with collaborative outcomes.	DOE
	Improve departmental IT and data standards to facilitate information sharing and AI readiness.	DOE, could be in coordination with other agencies
	Establish clear, decisive governance structures for cross-cutting initiatives.	DOE
	Create fenced cross-cut funds for joint initiatives.	DOE, Congress
	Implement a simpler and uniform approach for SBIR and TCF.	DOE, with flexible authority from Congress