



AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION
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Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics

ADVANCING EXCELLENCE IN FEDERAL STATISTICS

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March 20, 2020

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Alexander, Ranking Member Feinstein, Chair Kaptur, and Ranking Member Simpson,

We write to thank you for your strong support of the Energy Information Administration (EIA) through the FY20 level of \$126.7 million. We also wish to convey our support for the administration's request of \$128.6 million for the FY21 budget. We recognize difficult decisions must be made in the current environment and emphasize the importance of EIA data to our economy and security.

Energy issues are integrally tied to our economy and national security. Hundreds of billions of dollars ride on energy markets; investments in energy production and conservation; and investments in energy-consuming equipment, appliances, and vehicles. Our reliance on energy imports and the volatile nature of the global energy market make energy a security issue.

The EIA is the principal source of objective information to help us understand our needs and risks and guide our decisions. Policymakers, businesses, and regulators rely upon the EIA for data concerning domestic and global energy reserves, energy production, energy consumption, and energy efficiency. Also, the EIA has been a leader in making their data accessible to the public, including through innovative graphical displays exemplified by their U.S. Energy Data Mapping System (www.eia.gov/state/maps.cfm).

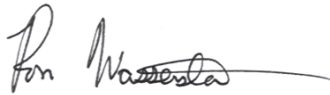
Another indicator of EIA's importance is its broad data user community: private citizens; finance/consulting; energy sector; business; industry; education; government; and media. To better appreciate the value of EIA's work and its efforts to keep up with this dynamic sector of our economy, we highlight several items from the impressive list of recent innovations in the FY21 budget justification: enhanced suite of electricity tools and resources, including the Hourly Electric Grid Monitor; customizable and interactive State Energy Portal; new U.S. Biodiesel Plant Production Capacity Report; new liquids pipeline projects database; addition of new play production data to shale gas and tight oil reports; and redesign of one of EIA's most-visited resources, Energy Explained, with a more user-friendly interface and interactive data visualizations.

Given the importance of EIA data to our economy and security, we urge keeping the EIA budget at its FY20 level of effort so EIA can maintain its important work to provide data and analysis of such regional issues as electricity transmission infrastructure and modernization, nuclear generators, and petroleum supply information. A level of \$128.7 million would also, as explained in the budget justification, enable EIA to begin a multi-year effort to modernize its energy modeling capabilities and continue planned cybersecurity initiatives to bolster information security.

In our opinion, EIA data should be viewed as a form of business intelligence that informs national policies. We must support that intelligence, given that its strategic importance and economic value is critical to our decision-making in navigating the world energy conditions.

Thank you for your consideration and for your support of EIA in FY20 and previous years.

Sincerely,



Ron Wasserstein
Executive Director, American Statistical
Association



Cynthia Clark
Executive Director, COPAFS