

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 20, 2026

The Honorable Chris Wright
Secretary
Department of Energy
1000 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20585

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Secretary Wright and Director Vought:

In light of court filings recently made public, we write to condemn in the strongest terms your decision to terminate nearly 300 energy projects in October 2025 based solely on the political identity of the grant recipient's state. We are deeply concerned by how these terminations were politically motivated to target projects in Democratic-leaning states, undermine the spirit of competitively awarded merit-based decision making for how federal taxpayer dollars are spent, and risk further increasing costs for our constituents. We urge you to immediately reinstate the funding for these projects that were subject to blatantly partisan cancellation.

In October 2025, the Department of Energy (DOE) announced the decision to terminate nearly 300 energy projects in blue states, totaling more than \$7.5 billion.¹ This announcement followed a post from Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Russ Vought that "nearly \$8 billion in Green New Scam funding to fuel the Left's climate agenda is being cancelled... The projects are in the following states: CA, CO, CT, DE, HI, IL, MD, MA, MN, NH, NJ, NM, NY, OR, VT, WA."² The terminations came as President Trump was repeatedly threatening to use the government shutdown as an opportunity for political retribution against Democrats.³

Despite these facts, for months, Secretary Wright repeatedly denied that the decision to terminate these grants were related to partisanship, including while testifying to Congress that "all of the 2,270 projects we evaluated were not evaluated in any way, shape or form based on where they were. ... And all of the people that worked on our project review process did not take into account any politics in the evaluation of these projects," and claiming that project decisions were made based on "merits and unrelated to politics."⁴

Yet in a court filing this month, the Department's own lawyers contradicted Secretary Wright's testimony to Congress, attesting that none of the grants terminated in October 2025 were terminated "based on any programmatic, statutory, cost-reduction, or performance-based

¹ DOE, <https://www.energy.gov/articles/energy-department-announces-termination-223-projects-saving-over-75-billion>

² X, <https://x.com/russvought/status/1973450301236715838>

³ CNBC, <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/115304455138824245>

⁴ House Appropriations Committee, <https://appropriations.house.gov/schedule/hearings/budget-hearing-department-energy>

factor.”⁵ DOE lawyers further admitted that, following OMB’s review and selection of grants to terminate, “the inclusion of grants in the October notice tranche was based solely on the political identity of the grant recipient’s state, i.e., whether the recipient’s location and/or place of performance was in a Blue State or a non-Blue State.”⁶ These astonishing admissions in court raise serious concerns about the legality of these terminations.

This blatant weaponization of federal taxpayer dollars to punish states based on their political leanings is wholly inappropriate and in violation of the Fifth Amendment’s guarantee of equal protection of the laws. The courts have already ruled against the DOE terminations. In a different lawsuit, *St. Paul v. Wright*, DOE lawyers admitted that a “primary reason for the selection of which DOE grant termination decisions were included in the October 2025 notice tranche was whether the grantee was located in a ‘Blue State,’ —a state that ‘tend[s] to elect and/or recently elected Democratic candidates in state and national elections,’ including for President of the United States in 2024.”⁷ On January 12, 2026, the court ruled that the termination decisions violated the Fifth Amendment’s equal protection guarantees because the classification “was not rationally related to the asserted legitimate government purpose of ‘administering grant programs consistent with the agency’s priorities.’”⁸ Months later, in *American Institute of Chemical Engineers v. Wright*, the Administration admitted again that the grantees’ awards were terminated because of their location in blue states and conceded it was in violation of equal protection guarantees.⁹

Further, this Administration’s decision to play political games will result in genuine harms at a time when millions American families are already struggling to pay their electricity bills amidst the ever-rising cost of living. This Administration’s reckless energy policy and award terminations, designed to stifle the development of clean, affordable energy in Democratic-aligned states and prop up more expensive dirty energy, will only further increase the cost burden for families to keep the lights on and kill good-paying jobs.

Two court decisions have now found that your department violated the Fifth Amendment’s equal protection guarantee when it terminated grants in Democratic-leaning states in October 2025. Based on DOE’s own admission in the recent court filings that all the grant terminations in October were based on political factors, DOE and OMB must immediately reinstate all grants that it has wrongfully terminated. There is no other acceptable remedy for this corrupt abuse of power and weaponization of taxpayer dollars. We will utilize every oversight and legislative tool available to ensure that DOE and OMB follow the law, honor congressional intent, and address the skyrocketing cost of electricity.

⁵ *Thakur v. et al. v. Trump, et al.* <https://ucresearchergrantterminations.com/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/ECF-No.-211-Declaration-of-KYLE-A.-MCLORG-in-support.pdf>

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *St. Paul v. Wright* <https://www.casemine.com/judgement/us/69d1102f155ce70b00ebdecc>

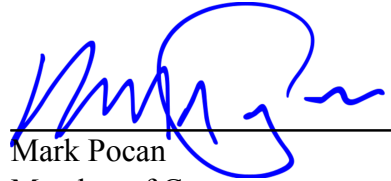
⁸ Sabin Center for Climate Change Law, https://www.climatecasechart.com/document/city-of-saint-paul-v-wright_a118

⁹ Court Listener, <https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/73110111/american-institute-of-chemical-engineers-v-wright/>

Sincerely,



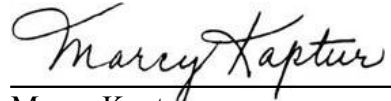
Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



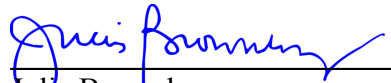
Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



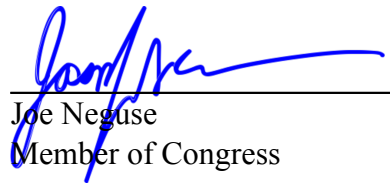
Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.
Member of Congress



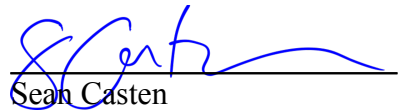
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



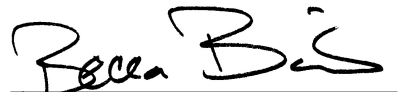
Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



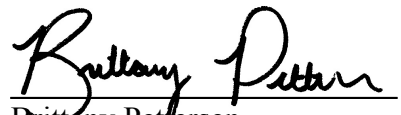
Ed Case
Member of Congress



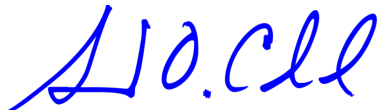
Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Brittany Petersen
Member of Congress



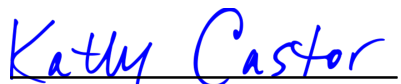
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



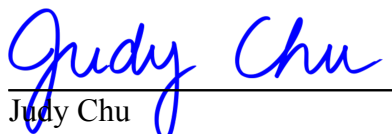
Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Susie Lee
Member of Congress



Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress



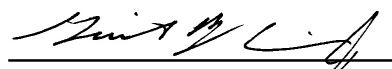
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



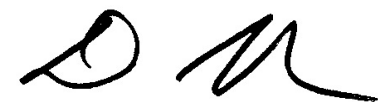
George Latimer
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



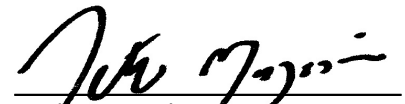
Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress



Dave Min
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove
Member of Congress



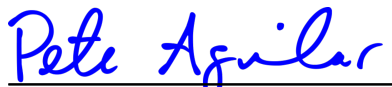
Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



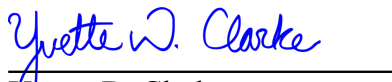
Jim Himes
Member of Congress



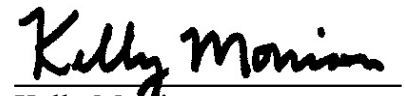
Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Kelly Morrison
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress