

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 8, 2013

The Honorable Daniel Poneman
Deputy Secretary of Energy
U.S. Department of Energy
1000 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20585

Dear Mr. Poneman:

We write to express our strong support for continuing funding from the domestic fusion energy research program for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's (MIT) Alcator C-Mod tokamak program in Fiscal Year 2013. We believe this funding is critical to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and to the future of energy research in the United States.

For decades, MIT has been a leader in fusion energy research as well as a major training site for scientists and engineers in plasma physics and nuclear engineering. The Alcator C-Mod tokamak, operated by MIT as a DOE national user facility, is the centerpiece of the MIT Plasma Science and Fusion Center, where that important work continues today.

Unfortunately, the President's FY 2013 Budget Proposal requested deep cuts to the domestic fusion research program including the closure of C-Mod. However, at no point in the appropriations process has Congress either approved or authorized the closure of C-Mod or significant curtailment of its activities.

We are deeply troubled that the Department of Energy's Office of Fusion Energy Science (OFES) has ignored Congressional intent regarding the overall balance between contributions to the international ITER project and funding for domestic fusion research. Although DOE is funded for FY 2013 under a Continuing Resolution, it is our understanding it has begun the process of halting all C-Mod experiments.

We are further concerned that the President's Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Proposal may continue to shift funding from the domestic fusion program to ITER and continue to decimate domestic research activities in magnetically confined fusion. An OFES order to discontinue operation of C-Mod would bring fusion research at MIT to a virtual halt, disconnecting the pipeline of scientific and engineering talent in the U.S. fusion community from its largest source. It is also likely to delay the construction and commissioning of ITER itself.


It is also our understanding that ITER will not begin to operate for approximately a decade and will not be ready for leading-edge research for 15 years or more. We are deeply concerned that failing to provide funding for MIT fusion research will severely limit opportunities for U.S. fusion students and researchers in the intervening years, threaten our leadership position in the fusion community, and harm the American economy in the long term. Therefore, we urge you to reconsider this change in course before it causes irreparable harm to the entire OFES program and to worldwide efforts to develop clean, safe energy production via fusion.

The Honorable Daniel Poneman
April 8, 2013
Page 2


MIT's emphasis on American innovation in fusion energy and on training our next generation of fusion energy scientists is a vital component of our nation's energy research program and is essential to the future success of the international ITER program. Therefore, we ask you to provide appropriate funding for the Alcator C-Mod and to restore its operations and research funding in Fiscal Year 2013.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



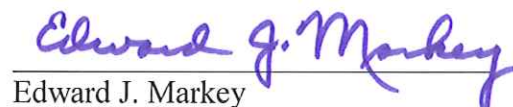
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



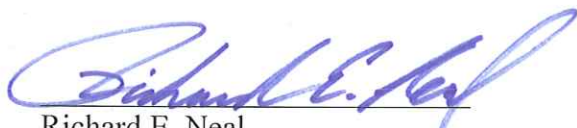
William "Mo" Cowan
United States Senator



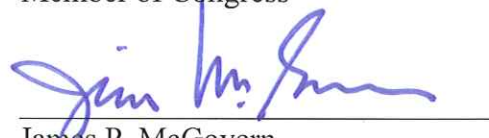
Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



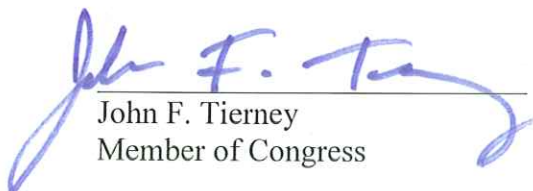
Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress



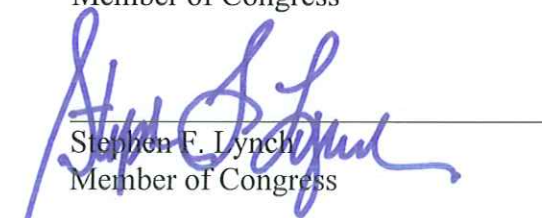
Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



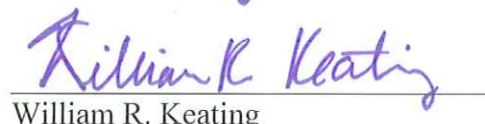
John F. Tierney
Member of Congress



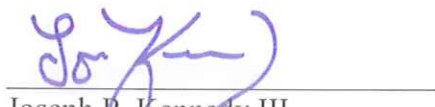
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Joseph P. Kennedy III
Member of Congress