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Hon. Chuck Hagel
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Hon. Warren Rudman



June 15, 2018

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The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy
& Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy
& Natural Resources
304 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski and Senator Cantwell -

On behalf of the American Security Project, a nonpartisan national security think tank, to thank you for passing H.R.589 and S.2503, House and Senate versions of the “Department of Energy Research and Innovation Act,” through the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I commend you both for coming together in a bipartisan fashion to bring forward legislation that would advance a number of priorities for science, research, and development.

A new initiative of ASP is the “American Fusion Project,” bringing together companies, scientists, and universities intent on commercializing fusion power as fast as possible. ASP has supported efforts to advance fusion power for years because it would provide the ultimate in energy security and scientific leadership to the United States. The research will be worth the effort – and with private companies now pursuing aggressive timelines, it is time for Congress to support this work.

I note that there are important provisions related to fusion energy innovation in the bill. The work that fusion researchers and new fusion companies are doing matches up with the legislation’s goals, listed within the bill, to identify “innovative fusion energy systems that have the potential to demonstrate net energy production not later than 15 years after the start of construction.” If this legislation does become law, we look forward to working with you and the Department of Energy to identify priorities for fusion energy research that would accelerate fusion toward our shared goals of clean, reliable, and secure fusion energy.

As your committee considers further legislation in 2018 to increase American energy security and advance American scientific leadership we would ask that developing fusion be considered as a long-term strategic priority for the country. It is not an exaggeration to say that nothing would reshape America’s energy situation more than a breakthrough leading to commercial fusion reactors. On this and other issues, please consider the American Security Project as a resource.

Sincerely,

Stephen A. Cheney
BGen USMC (Ret)
Chief Executive Officer

