



May 30, 2023

The Honorable Lisa Blunt Rochester
U.S. House of Representatives
1724 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Blunt Rochester,

I wish to convey the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) strong support for the recently introduced *Energy Emergency Leadership Act* (H.R. 3277), which would amend the *U.S. Department of Energy Organization Act* to include energy emergency and energy security among the functions that the U.S. Secretary of Energy shall assign to an Assistant Secretary. NASEO represents the governor-designated State Energy Directors and their offices from each of the 56 states, territories, and the District of Columbia. We are especially supportive of the provisions in the Act that would provide technical assistance, support, and response capabilities with respect to energy sector threats, risks, and incidents to state, local, and tribal governments, and the energy sector.

In 2016, NASEO called for the creation of the U.S. Department of Energy’s Office of Cyber Security, Energy Security and Emergency Response (CESER), and we want to stress our support for and appreciation of the exceptional leadership of Director Kumar and his team, as well as the importance of continuity of that leadership in helping to navigate current threats to the energy system. Their responsiveness in preparing for and responding to energy emergencies such as the Colonial Pipeline cyber event, numerous hurricanes, wildfires, and other events has helped states and energy providers reduce the impact of these events and aided in speeding recovery. Ensuring the nation’s lead federal agency for energy emergency preparedness and response – CESER – is at a level consistent with the critical importance of helping to secure our energy system in the face of nation-state cyberattacks and massive natural and man-made disasters is essential to coordinating with governors, State Energy Directors, private sector energy leaders, and relevant federal agency officials.

State Energy Offices support their governors in advancing practical energy programs and policies, and complete state energy plans that cover every energy production, distribution, and end-use sector. In partnership with DOE and the private sector, the vast majority of State Energy Offices address physical and cyber energy security concerns across regulated and unregulated energy sectors (electric grid and fuels) and mission critical facilities. The *Infrastructure, Investment, and Jobs Act* (IIJA), consistent with previous (e.g., 2017, 2019) U.S. House of Representatives energy actions under the leadership of both Democrats and Republicans, designated State Energy Offices as leading the development of State Energy Security Plans under Section 40108.

State Energy Offices and the State Energy Security Plans they create are the foundation of states’ energy emergency and resilience planning and work to identify threats,

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hazards, and vulnerabilities, as well as mitigation actions to limit the impacts of energy supply disruptions resulting from physical and cyber events. In addition, for the vast majority of states, State Energy Offices were designated by their governors as the lead agency for the implementation of the IIJA Section 40101(d) grid resilience formula grants to states to prevent outages and enhance the resilience of the electric grid under IIJA.

The *Energy Emergency Leadership Act* shows your continued leadership in the critical area of energy security and resilience. For example, your sponsorship of the “Open Back Better” legislation with Senator Smith in an earlier Congress, if enacted, would also enhance resilience and better prepare the nation to respond to disasters, climate change, energy security and cybersecurity issues.

NASEO greatly appreciates your efforts to ensure that DOE, State Energy Offices, and private-sector energy providers have the support and resources they need to prepare for, respond to, and mitigate against all hazards impacting the electric grid, fuels, and mission-critical facilities.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Terry', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

David Terry, President
NASEO