

H. MORGAN GRIFFITH

9TH DISTRICT, VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEES:

OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS
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May 3, 2021

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Chairwoman
Energy and Water Development
Appropriations Subcommittee
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chairman
Energy and Water Development
Appropriations Subcommittee
2362-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Kaptur and Ranking Member Simpson:

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to highlight matters of great importance to my district, the country, and I will argue, the rest of the world, as you move forward in the appropriations process. I'd like to address the importance of research and development (R&D) funding at the Department of Energy (DOE) in general, and specifically at the Office of Fossil Energy (FE).

I believe there needs to be research parity between renewable fuels and research on ways to better utilize fossil fuels.

As this Congress continues to examine our global climate, it is imperative that any effective plan to counter climate change include our nation's vast supply of natural resources and our talent for technological innovation. China is anticipated to increase its emissions over the next decade and is currently the largest consumer of coal.

This does not take into account the large number of coal-fired power plants China is financing in Africa and other countries with emerging economies. We know the rest of the world will continue to use fossil fuels for decades to come because for them more energy means less poverty.

In India, coal still accounts for nearly three-fourths of the country's annual power output. Though they have recently set a target to install renewable energy in the coming years, hundreds of thousands of rural Indians do not have access to reliable around the clock electricity in their homes. Their government will want to resolve that problem and will likely use coal in that effort. India will use renewables, but to lift their poorest citizens out of 19th century conditions, they

must use coal. Many other countries are in the same situation. They can use mid-20th century coal-burning technology or they can use 21st century American cleaner coal-burning technology. Accordingly, I believe a role for American ingenuity is to produce and export better, cleaner, more efficient technology for the world.

The northern hemisphere shares its air. While cleaning up the air in Toledo, Ohio is helpful, in order to stop climate change and eliminate environmental hazards, we must also work to clean the air in coal rich Kazakhstan and in the Uttar Pradesh state in Northern India.

DOE plays an important role in this R&D, but it can do more for exploration and innovation in the energy space with the right support.

I'd like to highlight a team of experts at Virginia Tech who are developing processes to extract rare earth elements from coal byproducts. A consortium of universities including Virginia Tech has won grants from DOE to test a hydrophobic-hydrophilic separation process to produce clean coal and specialty carbon products for discarded coal wastes. As a result of this research, they have also found a way to improve the quality of coal burned at steel plants. They are licensing this technology to steel mills in India which will reduce the mills' carbon footprint. This serves as just one example of how DOE R&D funding can be used in conjunction with our national labs and research universities to get projects like this off the ground.

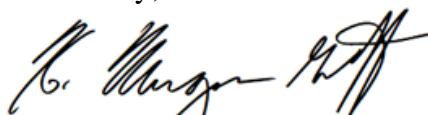
Another example I'd like to share involves an innovative small business in Pulaski, Virginia. MOVA Technologies, Inc. has developed filtration bed equipment to remove pollutants from flue gas streams and recycle them for other uses. The technology can be applied to a number of industries including energy generation, cargo ships, manufacturing processes, livestock farm air control systems, or direct carbon capture. This type of creative thinking and design will help us solve the environmental and economic challenges we face.

I am not advocating to reduce research for renewable fuels. What I am advocating is that there should be parity between the amount of money appropriated for fossil energy research and other DOE research accounts—particularly with the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. In fact, last year during testimony in the select committee on climate, both Democratic and Republican witnesses thought research parity was desirable.

A comprehensive “all of the above” energy policy must include robust funding for R&D at the federal level. These funds will continue to shorten the timeline to ready many clean energy technologies for commercial use.

I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "H. Morgan Griffith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and "G".

H. MORGAN GRIFFITH
Member of Congress