

May 13, 2024

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins, Vice Chair
Senate Committee on Appropriations
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chris Murphy, Chair
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Katie Britt, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
502 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairmen Murray and Murphy, Vice Chair Collins, and Ranking Member Britt:

The Business Council for Sustainable Energy (BCSE) encourages Congress to provide funding for disaster and emergency planning to support community clean energy and resilience in the FY2025 Homeland Security appropriations bill. Specifically:

- 1) Full funding of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) program at 6% of the funds disbursed for disaster assistance. More is needed, as is greater attention to critical energy actions within this program.
- 2) New state emergency planning and response grants at a \$20 million funding level to support coordination between state energy offices, state emergency management agencies, FEMA, and the Department of Energy Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response.
- 3) New direct funding to states for public facility resilience, energy, and water system retrofits to update mission critical facilities – especially including hospitals, schools, community shelters, non-profit nursing homes, and first responder facilities – utilizing private capital for energy efficiency improvements with federal funds directed to emergency response upgrades. (This program could be operated by state energy offices, who already manage the existing \$5 – 6 billion per year in energy service performance contracting programs.) In addition, special provision could be made to target underserved rural healthcare facilities.

The nation's energy infrastructure and delivery systems are vulnerable to many hazards, such as severe weather (including hurricanes, floods, tornados, ice storms, extended heat waves, and cold snaps), earthquakes, wildfires, accidents and errors, physical and cyber-attacks, and other events. For this reason, BCSE was involved during debate on and enactment of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act, P.L.115-254 (DRRA) which was a bipartisan piece of legislation to establish the BRIC program. The BRIC program is designed to address the rising costs of disasters in the United States and to ensure communities are better prepared. The law allows as much as 6% annual spending under the FEMA Disaster Relief Fund to go toward pre-disaster mitigation projects to assist communities as they prepare for potential future hazards. These funds are awarded on a competitive basis.



State energy officials have primary responsibility for the nation's energy assurance planning. The purpose of that planning is to achieve robust, secure, and reliable energy infrastructure that is also resilient — able to restore services rapidly in the event of any disaster. It is the responsibility of state and local officials to work with energy providers and stakeholders from other jurisdictions, government agencies, businesses, and related organizations to reduce consequences and assure public safety, provide for rapid recovery, and reduce risk and vulnerabilities to critical energy infrastructure. BCSE and our members work closely with state energy officials to support their work on energy emergency planning and response.

BCSE looks forward to working with you to develop a FY2025 budget that achieves fiscal restraint while providing the needed funding for building resilient communities. Please feel free to reach out to Ruth McCormick at rmccormick@bcse.org with any questions or to arrange a time to meet.

Sincerely,

Lisa Jacobson
President
Business Council for Sustainable Energy

About the BCSE

BCSE is a coalition of companies and trade associations from the energy efficiency, energy storage, natural gas, renewable energy, sustainable transportation, and emerging decarbonization technology sectors. It includes independent electric power producers, investor-owned utilities, public utilities, equipment manufacturers, commercial end users, and service providers in energy and environmental markets. Founded in 1992, the coalition's diverse business membership is united around the revitalization of the U.S. economy and the creation of a clean, secure, and reliable energy future in America.

The Clean Energy Business Network (CEBN), comprising independent small- and medium-sized businesses, is an independent affiliate of BCSE. Together, BCSE and CEBN encompass a broad range of the clean energy economy, from Fortune 100 companies to small businesses working in all 50 states and more than 400 Congressional districts. On a national basis, these industries support more than 3 million U.S. jobs.

CC: Members of House Appropriations Committee