March 29, 2018

Honorable Orrin Hatch
Chairman, Committee on Finance
125 S. State Street, #8402
Salt Lake City UT 84138

Dear Chairman Hatch:

As business and community leaders, we thank you for being a partner in driving Utah’s innovation and clean energy industry. We are concerned with the substantial reductions in energy technology research and development funding in President Trump’s FY 2019 federal budget proposal. This dramatic reduction in funding for vital investments in energy innovation programs at the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) will hinder the long-term growth of the clean tech industry and the economic and air quality benefits that this industry provides to our state.

We are proud that Utah has emerged as a clean energy leader. Utah ranks 8th nationally in solar capacity and our solar industry employs over 6,000 workers. Energy efficiency industries also employ over 30,000 workers and deliver savings of over $250 million to Utah families and businesses each year.

The U.S. DOE’s Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) research and development programs have played an important role in building Utah’s clean energy industry, incubating new technologies and
tackling big picture challenges such as transmission and integration of renewable energy into our energy grid, while also reducing the cost of emerging technologies. The DOE’s SunShot Initiative, which you have been a strong supporter of, has substantially reduced the cost of solar photovoltaic (PV) projects. And the DOE’s Building and Vehicle Technologies programs have been critical to bringing groundbreaking technologies including LED lighting, smart high-performance buildings, and energy storage to market.

However, much work remains to harness the United States’ vast potential for innovative energy, vehicle and building technologies. The drastic funding reductions proposed for the U.S. DOE’s energy innovation programs for FY 2019, particularly to DOE’s Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) programs, threaten to leave our potential unrealized. The FY 2019 budget proposal would cut the EERE budget by $1.3 billion, a 65% cut from FY 2018 levels. It would also eliminate the State Energy Program (SEP), the Advanced Research Project Agency-Energy (ARPA-E), and the Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP).

As the Senate begins its annual budget appropriations process, we ask you to work with your Senate colleagues to maintain current FY 2018 levels of funding for DOE EERE programs, the ARPA-E program, and the Weatherization Assistance Program. Substantial reductions in funding are detrimental to these important DOE energy technology research, development and deployment programs that help to deliver affordable, stable-priced and sustainable energy, provide good jobs, improve air quality and bolster our energy and national security.

Thank you for working with us to support and sustain Utah’s clean energy industry. Please contact Josh Craft at Utah Clean Energy at 801-590-4823 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

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