

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

April 4, 2019

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Feinstein:

We are writing to thank you for your past support of U.S.-Israeli energy cooperation programs, including the U.S.-Israel Energy Center of Excellence in Energy, Engineering and Water Technology ("Center of Excellence"), and to request that the subcommittee provide \$6 million for these programs in fiscal year (FY) 2020. Funding would support programs carried out under the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperative Agreement and the Center of Excellence. The Government of Israel has committed to matching U.S. funding for these programs and private sector participants contribute funding as well.

Funding for the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperative Agreement supports collaborative research and development efforts in the fields of alternative energy technologies and increased energy efficiency. Congress has provided \$19.7 million for the program since its inception, fully matched by the Government of Israel. Additionally, since 2009, the program has leveraged approximately \$41 million in private sector cost-share.

Section 917 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-140) and the May 2008 agreement between the U.S. and Israel on alternative energy cooperation provided the initial authorization for the program. The program is administered by the U.S.-Israel Binational Industrial Research and Development (BIRD) Foundation in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and Israel's Ministry of National Infrastructure, Energy, and Water Resources.

This program provides grants to U.S. and Israeli small businesses and academic institutions to develop technologies in the fields of alternative and renewable energy and energy efficiency, including wind, solar, electric vehicles, power storage, grid efficiency, and biofuels. BIRD has provided grants to projects in 21 U.S. states since 2009. Projects that qualify for BIRD energy funding must include one U.S. and one Israeli company, or a company from one country paired with a university or research institution from the other. Qualified projects must contribute at least 50 percent to project costs and commit to repayments if the project leads to commercial success.

In 2018, DOE and the Israeli Energy Ministry signed the Implementation Agreement to establish the Center for Excellence, first authorized under the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-296). This agreement provides the foundation for the establishment of the Center for Excellence, which aims to accelerate development and deployment of critical and innovative technologies in four initial topic areas: fossil energy, energy cyber and physical security, energy-water nexus, and energy storage. The Center of Excellence includes joint research and development, academic, and technology transfer ventures in areas such as thermal power, produced and wastewater treatment, desalination, clean energy, produced water, natural gas, and protection of critical infrastructure through cybersecurity. It also brings together industry and thought leaders from the United States and Israeli governments, academia, and private sector in the research and development of new energy and water technologies.

Neither the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperative Agreement nor the Center of Excellence is an aid program. These programs are important tools in our efforts to achieve greater energy security and independence, leverage private sector dollars, and incentivize academic and private sector innovation in the pursuit of a critical objective.

We thank you for your consideration and for your prior support for U.S.-Israel energy cooperation. We look forward to continuing to work together in support of these cooperative efforts in FY 2020.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



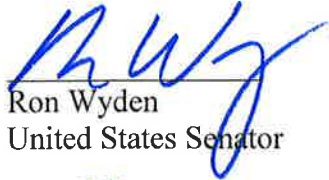
Kevin Cramer
United States Senator



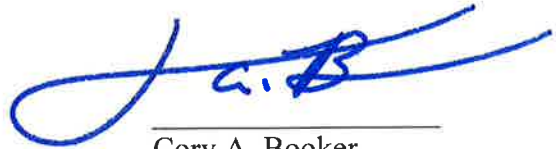
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Martha McSally
United States Senator



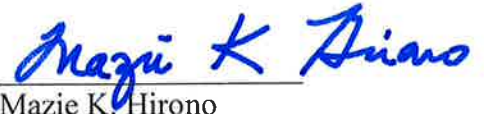
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



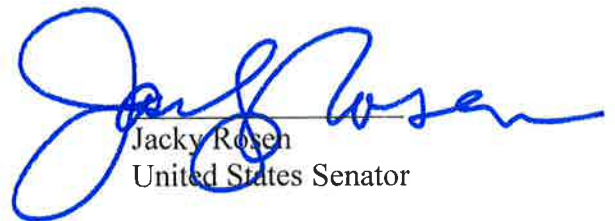
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United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



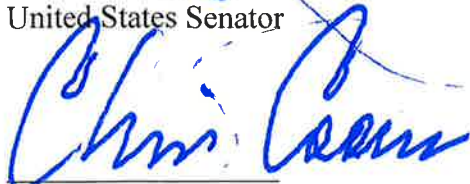
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United States Senator



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Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Doug Jones
United States Senator



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