



## The Secretary of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

January 20, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR HEADS OF DEPARTMENTAL ELEMENTS

FROM: INGRID C. KOLB  
ACTING SECRETARY

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ingrid C. Kolb".

SUBJECT: Agency-wide Review of Program and Administrative Activities

As we navigate through this transition period for a new Administration within the Department of Energy (DOE), it is imperative to ensure a deliberate approach to the Administration's programmatic and administrative policies and priorities. To that end, effective immediately and until further notice, prior to any actions or decisions on all herein described activities, a review under varying criteria will be undertaken to ensure all such actions are consistent with current Administration policies and priorities, including budgetary priorities.<sup>1</sup> The broad spectrum of actions include but are not limited to: personnel actions; awarding of grants, loans, funding opportunities, and cost sharing agreements; contracting, procurement announcements, and actions; rulings, decisions or other actions on any applications, enforcement action, or settlements of any contested matter; submissions to the Federal Register for publication; and the publication or announcement of reports, studies, congressional correspondence, and public statements. This includes all studies or reports that are either ongoing, set to be released, are already under review, or have not yet begun.

The reviews are necessary to facilitate a comprehensive review of the Department's ongoing activities and to align these efforts with Congressional authorizations and the Administration's priorities, to ensure that resources are allocated efficiently, and that the Department's initiatives are in line with the statutory mission of DOE and the priorities of the Administration.

As discussed below, a process will be in place for the submission of requests for action by the Secretary (acting) to ensure the important work of the Department continues to serve the American people.

Scope of Actions:

1. **Personnel Actions:** All personnel actions, including appointments, promotions, and transfers, are to be halted. This includes both internal staff movements and external hiring processes, unless expressly and unambiguously authorized with the prior approval of the acting Secretary, after the date of issuance of this order.

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<sup>1</sup> With respect to NNSA, nothing herein is intended to contradict 50 USC Ch. 41 but to be construed broadly consistent with the Secretary's authority thereunder, include §2402(d).

2. **Procurement Announcements and Actions:** Any announcements or awards regarding procurement opportunities and contracts are to be put on hold, other than for routine building operations and supplies for contracts with a value of less than \$100,000. This includes, but is not limited to, requests for proposals (RFPs), requests for quotations (RFQs), and contract negotiations. Such approvals will be made in writing by the Secretary (acting) or the Head of Departmental Element with the prior approval of the Secretary (acting).
3. **Funding Actions:** All funding and financial assistance activities including loans, loan guarantees, grants, cost sharing agreements, funding opportunity announcements, and contracts shall not be announced, approved, finalized, modified, or provided until a review of such takes place to ensure compliance with Congressional authorization and Administration policy. Such approvals will be made in writing by the Secretary (acting) or the program head with the prior approval of the Secretary (acting).
4. **Release of Reports, Studies, Congressional Correspondence, and Public Announcements:** Submission of actions to the Secretary (acting) for approval shall be completed through relevant program heads prior to continuation of development and dissemination of any reports, studies, requests for information (RFIs) or congressional correspondence, including both finalized documents and those in draft form; conducting and scheduling public meetings related to any studies or reports. Relative to studies and reports being conducted by the National Laboratories, approvals must be obtained by the Head of Departmental Element with concurrence by the Administration designee within the Departmental Element. If reports or studies are subject to statutory or other requirements, a request for waiver from the reviews may be made to the Secretary (acting), who may grant the waiver. Submission of actions to the Secretary (acting) for approval shall be completed before publishing any Department social media posts, press releases, or other public announcements including website changes, even if previously scheduled and approved.
5. **Federal Register Notices:** Nothing should be sent to the Federal Register (FR) for publication without written approval of the Secretary (acting) or designee. The Office of the General Counsel is directed to: (i) immediately withdraw all items that have been submitted to the FR but have not yet been published, and (ii) provide the Secretary (acting) by noon on January 23 a list of all items that have been published but have not yet reached the date by which any such item is considered final (including the date such item becomes final).
6. **Actions under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA):** NEPA work may continue. However, the Secretary (acting) shall be informed of all NEPA work by January 24, 2025; or if new action is taken, at least 10 days before initiated. The scope of the NEPA reviews shall be reviewed by the Principal Deputy General Counsel or other person as designated by the Secretary (acting). Final Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements shall be

reviewed and approved by the Principal Deputy General Counsel or other person as designated by the Secretary (acting).

The reviews shall be conducted by all DOE offices, field offices, National Laboratories, and NNSA. There are no exemptions other than for routine building operations and supplies for contracts with a value of less than \$100,000 without prior approval by the Secretary (acting).

#### **Rescinding of Signature Authority.**

To ensure compliance with this Directive, all signature authority for any of the actions provided herein are rescinded. Any actions requiring signature authority should not proceed until explicit authorization is provided in writing by the Secretary (acting) or designee.

The heads or administrators of each of the program, administrative, and support offices, National Laboratory Directors, field offices, and NNSA shall immediately disseminate this memorandum within their respective organizations and ensure full compliance with the directives as applicable.

Further guidance regarding the full resumption of activities, results of the review process, additional changes in DOE priorities, interagency collaboration, and legal compliance guidance will be forthcoming. Your cooperation and understanding are greatly appreciated as we work to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the Department.