



AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION  
Promoting the Practice and Profession of Statistics®

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July 10, 2017

The Honorable Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy  
and Water Development  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy  
and Water Development  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen  
Chairman  
Appropriations Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Committee  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Alexander, Ranking Member Feinstein, Chairman Simpson, and Ranking Member Kaptur,

As president of the American Statistical Association, I write in support of the fiscal year 2018 (FY18) budget for the Energy Information Administration (EIA). I appreciate the FY17 levels provided by your committees for the EIA. For FY18, we urge a level of \$122 million. I recognize that difficult decisions must be made in the current environment and emphasize the importance of EIA data to our economy and security.

Energy issues are integrally tied to our economy and national security. Hundreds of billions of dollars ride on energy markets; investments in energy production and conservation; and investments in energy-consuming equipment, appliances, and vehicles. Our reliance on energy imports and the volatile nature of the global energy market make energy a security issue.

The EIA is the principal source of objective information to help us understand our needs and risks and guide our decisions. Policymakers, businesses, and regulators rely upon the EIA for data concerning domestic and global energy reserves, energy production, energy consumption, and energy efficiency. Also, the EIA has been a leader in making their data accessible to the public, including through innovative graphical displays exemplified by their new U.S. Energy Data Mapping System (<http://www.eia.gov/state/maps.cfm>).

Another indicator of EIA's importance is its broad data user community: private citizens, finance/consulting, energy sector, business, industry, education, government, and media. EIA is praised for its work, including this piece with the telling heading "Your tax dollars hard at

work,” about EIA’s new data portals: <https://energyathaas.wordpress.com/2014/04/27/your-tax-dollars-hard-at-work-eias-new-data-portals/>. The FY18 budget justification also contains an impressive list of recent accomplishments including improvements to the quality of its weekly petroleum balances, nearly real-time hourly electricity operating data for the Lower 48 states, and state-of-the-art dissemination tools that have greatly increased 24/7 information accessibility for EIA’s customers.

Given the importance of EIA data to our economy and security, we urge keeping the EIA budget at its FY17 level so that EIA can maintain its important work to provide data and analysis of such regional issues as electricity transmission infrastructure and modernization, nuclear generators, and petroleum supply information. A level of \$122 million would also enable EIA to maintain its research on the use of alternative data collection modes to provide more timely and subnational data more efficiently and cost effectively.

In my opinion, EIA data should be viewed as a form of business intelligence that informs national policies. We must support that intelligence given that its strategic importance and economic value is critical to our decision-making in navigating the world energy conditions.

Again, I understand the current federal budget environment calls for painful choices and thank you for your support of EIA in FY17 and previous years. Considering the value of reliable energy data, I also respectfully urge \$122 million for EIA in FY18.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Barry D. Nussbaum  
President, American Statistical Association

CC:

The Honorable Mike Simpson, Chairman, Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, United States House of Representatives  
The Honorable Marcy Kaptur, Ranking Member, Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development, United States House of Representatives