April 5, 2017

Hon. Mike Simpson  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development  
House Committee on Appropriations

Hon. Marcy Kaptur  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development  
House Committee on Appropriations

RE: Support for U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperation

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Kaptur:

We are writing to request that the Energy and Water Subcommittee provide $6 million for joint U.S.-Israel Cooperation programs. The funding will be utilized for the implementation of the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperative Agreement and for the establishment of the U.S.-Israel Energy Center ("Center of Excellence"). The government of Israel has committed to match U.S. funding for these programs. So for every dollar the U.S. provides—two dollars are spent cooperatively on energy research.

Funding for the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperative Agreement will provide for collaborative U.S.-Israeli research and development efforts in the fields of alternative energy technologies and increased energy efficiency. Congress has provided $15.7 million for the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperative Agreement program since its inception, fully matched by the Government of Israel. To date, the program has leveraged over $37 million in private sector cost-share since 2009.

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, which is administered by the U.S.-Israel Binational Industrial Research and Development (BIRD) Foundation, in cooperation with the Department of Energy and Israel’s Ministry of National Infrastructure, Energy and Water Resources.

The 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 19 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 of the countries paired with a university or research institution from the other. Qualified projects must contribute at least 50% to project costs and commit to repayments if the project leads to commercial success.
Funding for the U.S.-Israel Energy Center ("Center of Excellence") will bring to fruition a project that Congress, the Department of Energy (DOE), and the Government of Israel have worked on and supported for the past two years. The Center of Excellence will include 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.

Sec. 12(d) of the United States-Israel Strategic Partnership Act of 2014 (P.L. 113-296) provided for the creation of the Center of Excellence. The Center of Excellence is intended to bring together the best and brightest 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 United States-Israel Energy Center ("Center of Excellence") are aid programs. These programs are important tools in our efforts to achieve greater energy security and independence, and leverage a relatively small investment to 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 and request your continued support for FY 2018.

Sincerely,

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

Peter Roskam
Member of Congress

Eliot Engel
Member of Congress

Bill Johnson
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

Peter King
Member of Congress
Alcee L. Hastings  
Member of Congress  

Jackie Walorski  
Member of Congress  

Randy Weber  
Member of Congress  

Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress  

Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress  

Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress  

Gene Green  
Member of Congress  

Daniel Lipinski  
Member of Congress  

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress  

Ted Lieu  
Member of Congress  

Dina Titus  
Member of Congress  

Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress  

Leonard Lance  
Member of Congress  

Blake Farenthold  
Member of Congress  

Jim Langevin  
Member of Congress  

Donald M. Payne  
Member of Congress  

Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress  

 Earl Ruiz  
Member of Congress
Albies Sires  
Member of Congress

Sander Levin  
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress

David Scott  
Member of Congress

Doug Lamborn  
Member of Congress

Ann Mclane Kuster  
Member of Congress

Garret Graves  
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress

Barbara Comstock  
Member of Congress

Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress

John B. Larson  
Member of Congress

John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

Mark Takano  
Member of Congress

Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress

Beto O’Rourke  
Member of Congress

Martha McSally  
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress