March 16, 2018

The Honorable Mike Simpson  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development  
House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable 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 to continue implementation of the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperative Agreement and to develop the U.S.-Israel Energy Center (the “Center of Excellence”). The Israeli government has committed to match U.S. funding for these programs. So for every dollar the U.S. provides – two dollars are spent collaboratively on energy research.

Funding for the U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperative Agreement will facilitate joint U.S.-Israeli research and development efforts in the fields of alternative power and 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. Since 2009, it has leveraged over $37 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. It 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 alternative energy, renewable energy, and energy efficiency technologies, including new wind, solar, electric vehicle, power storage, grid efficiency, and biofuel innovations. BIRD has provided grants to projects in at least 19 U.S. states.
since 2009. Projects that qualify for BIRD 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. Participating projects must contribute at least 50% to project costs and commit to repayments if the product leads to commercial success.

Funding for the Center of Excellence will bring to fruition an effort that Congress, the Department of Energy, and the Government of Israel have worked on and supported for the past three years. Section 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. Once established, it will connect great minds from the United States and Israel to enable joint research and development in areas such as thermal power, clean energy, wastewater treatment, desalination, produced water, natural gas, and the protection of critical infrastructure through cybersecurity.

The U.S.-Israel Energy Cooperative Agreement and the Center of Excellence are not aid programs. These initiatives leverage a relatively small government investment to incentivize academic and private sector innovation in pursuit of a critical objective: energy security and independence.

Thank you for your consideration and prior funding for U.S.-Israel energy cooperation. We request your continued support for FY 2019.

Sincerely,

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

Peter Roskam
Member of Congress

Bill Johnson
Member of Congress

Peter King
Member of Congress
Alma S. Adams
Member of Congress

Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

David Cicilline
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Barbara Comstock
Member of Congress

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Jim Costa
Member of Congress

Ryan Costello
Member of Congress

Rick Crawford
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Danny K. Davis
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Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

Elizabeth H. Esty
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Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress

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John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

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Josh Gottheimer  
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Earl Blumenauer  
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Raúl Ruiz  
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Frederica S. Wilson  
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