

February 2021

4.6 Ideas for the Department of Energy



Credit: Kathleen Leavitt Cragun via Flickr Creative Commons

President Joe Biden is in the midst of his first 100-day policy sprint.

In honor of the 46th President, we have come up with a “Four Point Six” memo. This is our set of 4.6 recommendations the Biden Administration should follow in governance to promote policies to restore fiscal balance, increase transparency and accountability, and reduce the deficit. These recommendations span government agencies from Defense to Agriculture, Interior to the Office of Management and Budget. You can read the full memo [here](#).

Why 4.6? We could have done 46 but we decided to begin with our top priorities, and we consider the “Point Six” recommendation to be the simplest place to start.

Read on.

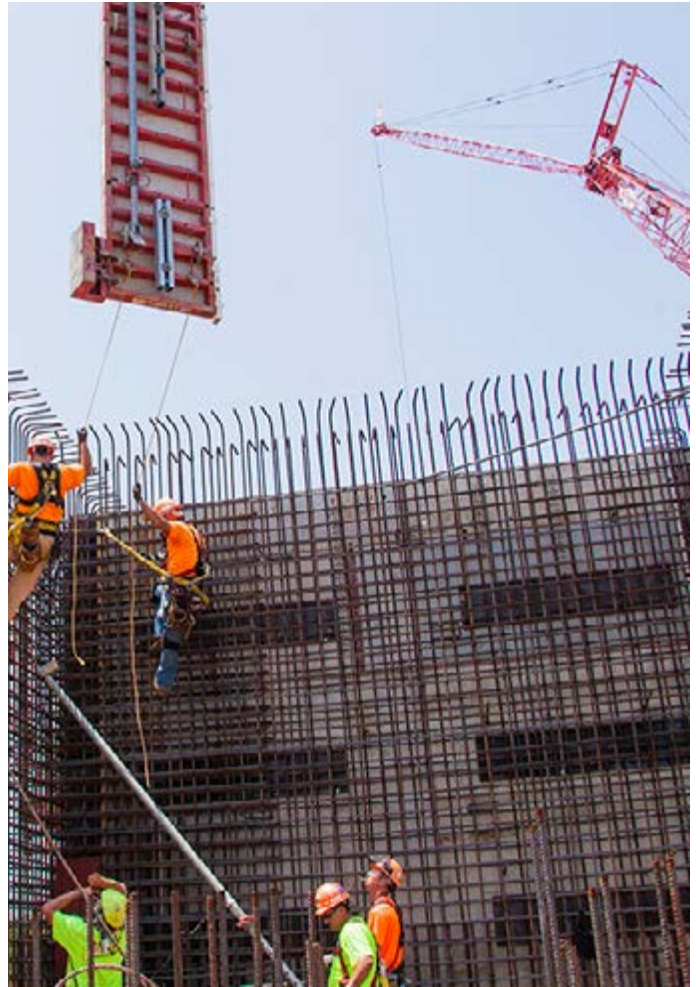
Department of Energy

- 1. Make a strategic research plan:** Basic research should remain at the core of DOE’s mission, but budgets have ballooned without restraint. Instead of letting Congress throw money at the climate problem, use the Department’s expertise and experience to make a guide (akin to the Quadrennial Energy Review) to say where we’re likely to get higher ROI and where we’re not. Blindly spending billions of dollars more on carbon capture tech and small modular reactors is not a solution.
- 2. Be smart moving beyond MOX:** Avoid another boondoggle with better budgeting to dispose of surplus plutonium. The clear lesson from the [MOX Facility fiasco](#) is: put in the work up front. Finish 90%+ engineering and design for any new construction, get states’ sign-off for any plutonium shipments, clear legal hurdles, and plan for contingencies. Slow is better than wasteful.

3. Cancel development and procurement of the W87-1 nuclear warhead for the Ground Based Strategic Deterrent (GBSD):

GBSD is the proposed replacement for the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile leg of the nuclear triad (See our recommendations for the Department of Defense to include terminating the GBSD contract for the convenience of the government.) Relatedly, reduce plans for pit production to reflect the cancellation of the W87-1 warhead.

4. Let go of the Loan Guarantee Program: Don't be fooled by lobbyists touting [the program](#) as a way to save clean energy. The program has languished because it's fundamentally flawed. Rescind any remaining authority and save on the office's overhead. The last thing taxpayers need is to put up another [\\$12 billion](#) for a badly managed [nuclear construction project](#).



Construction on MOX Fuel Facility at SRS Continues | Credit: Nuclear Energy Institute via Flickr Creative Commons

4.6 Do NOT fund the Carbon Free Power Project:

A Utah utility conglomerate (UAMPS) wants to build small modular reactors that have already enjoyed lavish government support. Months ago, DOE proposed heaping on another \$1.4 billion for the project. Don't make the same mistake twice; let SMRs sink or swim on their own.

This is an excerpt. Read the full Four Point Six memo at <https://www.taxpayer.net/budget-appropriations-tax/four-point-six/>



taxpayer.net



facebook.com/taxpayers



twitter.com/taxpayers



info@taxpayer.net