

American Statistical Association

Promoting the Practice and Profession of Statistics

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March 22, 2012

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

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

Dear Chairwoman Feinstein and Ranking Member Alexander,

As president of the American Statistical Association, which has 18,500 members, I write in support of the requested Fiscal Year 2013 (FY12) budget—\$116 million—for the Energy Information Administration (EIA).

Energy issues are integrally tied to our economy and national security. Hundreds of billions of dollars ride on energy markets, on investments in energy production and conservation, and on 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.

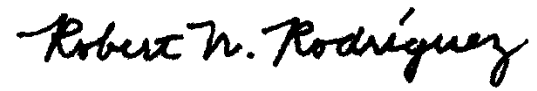
At every turn, EIA is the principal source of unbiased information to help us understand our needs, understand our risks, and guide our decisions. Policymakers, businesses, and regulators alike rely upon EIA for data concerning domestic and global energy reserves, energy production, energy consumption, and energy efficiency.

Given the importance of EIA data to our economy and security I believe full funding for the FY13 request is vital. It would allow EIA to modernize data collection processes, moving from paper to online systems that are easier for respondents and cheaper and faster to process. It also would allow EIA to fund important projects to improve the analysis of energy market behavior and the interrelationship of energy and financial markets. Perhaps most important, it would restore some EIA data collection and analysis activities that were suspended due to EIA's 14% budget cut in FY11. Gaps and delays in statistical series weaken data-based decisions, and their negative consequences worsen as the gaps grow longer.

In my opinion, EIA data should be viewed as a form of business and strategic intelligence to inform national policies. We should not undermine that intelligence when its strategic importance and economic value are so critical to our decision making in recovering from economic recession and navigating the world energy conditions.

Considering the extraordinary value of reliable energy data, I urge you to fully fund the FY13 EIA request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert N. Rodriguez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Robert N. Rodriguez, PhD
President, American Statistical Association