

11 Bright Ideas for Washington

A regional approach to clean energy

By Ernest J. Moniz

The most important role the government can play is to maintain the bipartisan commitment to invest in a low-carbon energy future and promote regional innovation. While the rest of the world is doubling down on clean energy innovation investments—both as a solution to environmental and security challenges and to capture market share in the multitrillion-dollar global clean energy economy—the Trump administration’s proposed budget would cut them in half. Congress should stay the course on bipartisan research and development investments that will pay significant dividends to the country in the future. These investments are good for business, jobs, regional economies and the nation’s laboratories and universities.

Congress should also support the development of regional energy innovation ecosystems. This approach draws upon the unique strengths and needs of regions across the country and can ensure that everyone prospers from a clean energy transformation. Over a dozen of the nation’s finest research universities have hosted regional

meetings to discuss this approach, and many submitted proposals to the Department of Energy on how to shape regional innovation. These should be supported and their recommendations pursued.

Despite President Trump’s abandonment of the Paris agreement, there’s no going back—the world is headed to a low-carbon future because of the risks posed by climate change and the associated security risks to the U.S. and our friends and allies. Supporting industry, academia, and city, state and regional leadership in pursuit of energy innovation will create jobs, enhance our global competitiveness and address the imperatives of climate change.

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