



DOE's 2025 IN REVIEW: A Year of Radical Uncertainty

Part of an EFI
Foundation series

MODERNIZING
**AMERICAN
ENERGY
INNOVATION**

DOE's 2025 in Review: A Year of Radical Uncertainty

Authors' Note: This analysis compiles data on the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) major activities in the first year of the second Trump administration. Forthcoming EFI Foundation work will analyze the near- and long-term implications of the energy dominance agenda, while this review examines the data behind the key actions taken—and not taken—by DOE in 2025.

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About the EFI Foundation

The EFI Foundation is an independent, nonpartisan leader tackling the toughest energy challenges of our time. Under the leadership of Ernest J. Moniz, the 13th U.S. Secretary of Energy, the EFI Foundation conducts rigorous research to accelerate the transition to a low-carbon economy through innovation in technology, policy, and business models. The EFI Foundation maintains editorial independence from its public and private sponsors.

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OVERVIEW

The Energy Dominance Agenda in 2025: Cuts, Cancellations, and a Few Priorities (1 OF 2)

The year started with a flurry of executive orders, including “Unleashing American Energy,” setting the tone for the administration’s **command-and-control approach to energy policy and markets** (*page 16*).



The energy dominance agenda was directed through 17 presidential executive orders, budgetary and deregulatory actions by OMB, and interagency coordination by the National Energy Dominance Council (NEDC). **Important questions remain about OMB’s control** of previously appropriated and obligated funds.

DOE’s year was dominated by **cancellations**. The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) canceled an unprecedented number of projects (345) and gave out the fewest number of new awards in one year across the science and energy innovation offices^(a) in recent history (*page 8*).



Most new awards were from solicitations made by the Biden administration. DOE issued only 11 new funding solicitations and many awards have yet to be finalized (*page 12*). Notably, Congress’ fiscal year (FY) **2026 appropriations included a clause that DOE “shall not terminate a federal award ... on the basis that the federal award no longer effectuates program goals or agency priorities.”**

In 2025, DOE obligated only **2% of its \$80 billion in available funding** for science and energy innovation from annual appropriations and carryover balances (*page 10*). The administration’s landmark legislation, **the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) rescinded only \$1.8 billion of DOE funds**, while Congress’ FY 2026 appropriations were \$4 billion higher (up 43%) than the president’s budget request (and only 3% lower than FY 2025 enacted funding). The Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE), which DOE removed from its new organizational chart, received over \$3.1 billion, a 250% increase from the president’s proposal (*page 19*).



OVERVIEW

The Energy Dominance Agenda in 2025: Cuts, Cancellations, and a Few Priorities (2 OF 2)

Under the Deferred Resignation Program (DRP), **3,050 employees (19.6% of total federal staff) left DOE**, raising concerns that progress in 2025 was impacted by a lack of human capacity and that future implementation to “unleash American energy” might face similar issues (*page 15*).



Most of the DOE solicitations offered and energy awards made were for technologies considered low carbon (*pages 8 and 9*).

Nuclear is a clear priority, receiving \$3.54 billion of the \$3.58 billion of awards made. Very small amounts were awarded for critical minerals (\$0.01 billion), energy storage (\$0.01 billion), and geothermal projects (\$0.01 billion), signs that these may be priorities moving forward.



DOE exercised several nontraditional support tools as part of its industrial policy.

DOE followed other federal agencies by restructuring its loan to Lithium Americas to secure a 5% equity stake in the company as part of the renegotiated financing,^(a) expanding the role of the federal government in industrial policy by creating a form of state capitalism (*page 16*). The Departments of Defense and Commerce have also taken equity stakes in nine companies across the nuclear, critical minerals, chips, and steel sectors.



DOE is planning to use its Other Transaction (OT) authority, which provides significant flexibility in how and what the department can contract, to accelerate the deployment of AI and energy infrastructure on federal land in hopes that the locations are attractive to private investment and permitting can be accelerated.^(b) The department is expected to issue a record number of OTs in the coming months via two new solicitations.^(c)

OVERVIEW

An Unclear Path Forward

- How will a loss of more than 3,000 staff agencywide (19.6%) via the DRP impact DOE's ability to do deals? Can DOE support its priority technologies?
- What does Congress' rejection of the White House's proposed major budget cuts in its FY 2026 appropriations bill mean for future alignment between Capitol Hill and the administration on the energy dominance agenda?
- What does DOE's reorganization, which created new offices for fusion, AI and quantum, and critical minerals, suggest about its future priorities? Will shuttering the Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED), clearly a capability this administration desires, limit DOE's ability to effectively manage later-stage projects, clearly an area of focus?
- Will there be future project cancellations and will these actions limit the private sector's willingness to do business with DOE in the future? Will Congress' directive in the FY 2026 appropriations to stop project cancellations provide necessary assurances for future private sector deals?
- How does the creation of "state champions" impact market competitiveness? What other nontraditional investment models will there be? Will state capitalism be extended to other parts of the energy sector?
- In the coming years, will the administration be able to leverage DOE's historically large budget to support their technology priorities or continue to rely on nonmonetary tools with a command-and-control approach?
- How will the Supreme Court rule on the administration's prerogative to withhold appropriated funds?



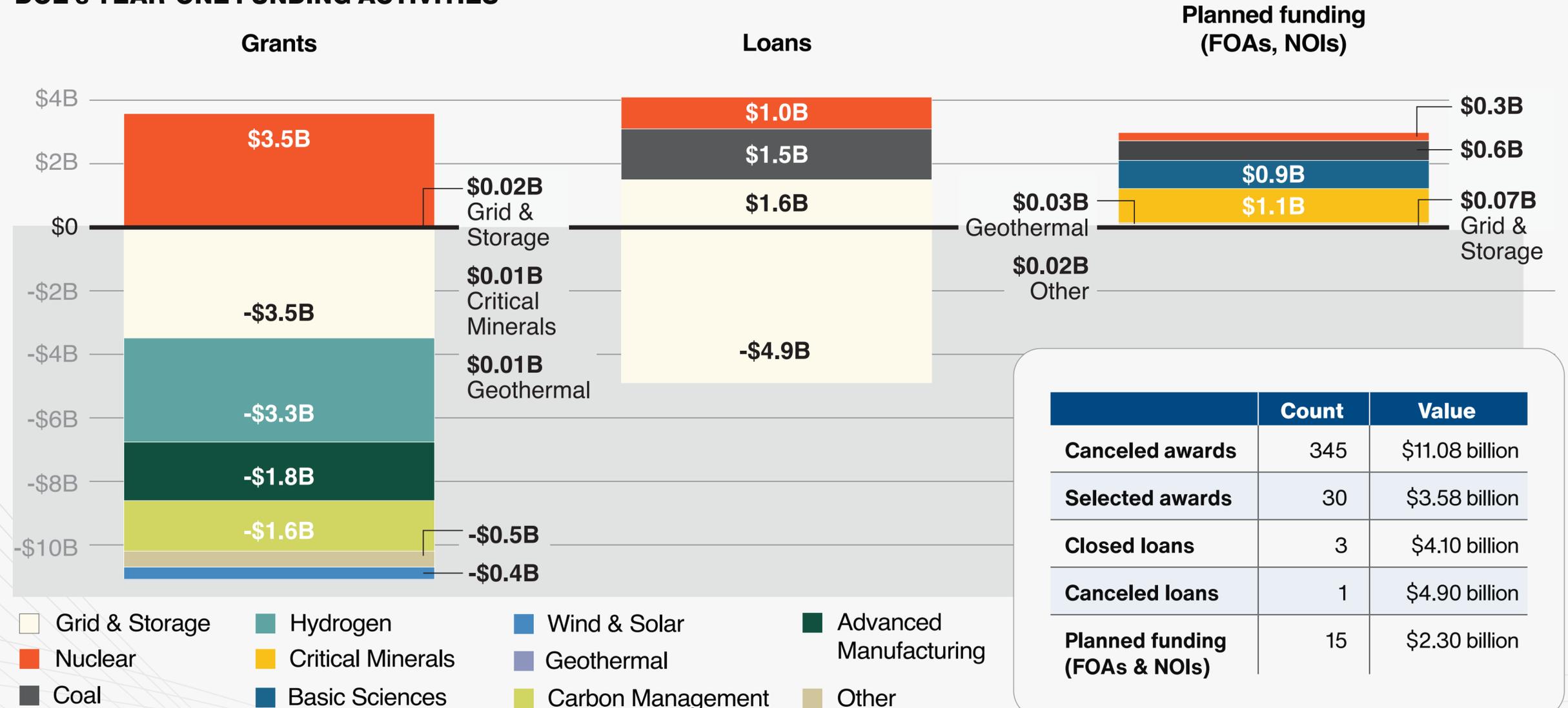


DOE's 2025 IN REVIEW: A Year of Radical Uncertainty

Analysis

In 2025, DOE Canceled Far More Projects Than It Supported

Figure 1. DOE's YEAR-ONE FUNDING ACTIVITIES

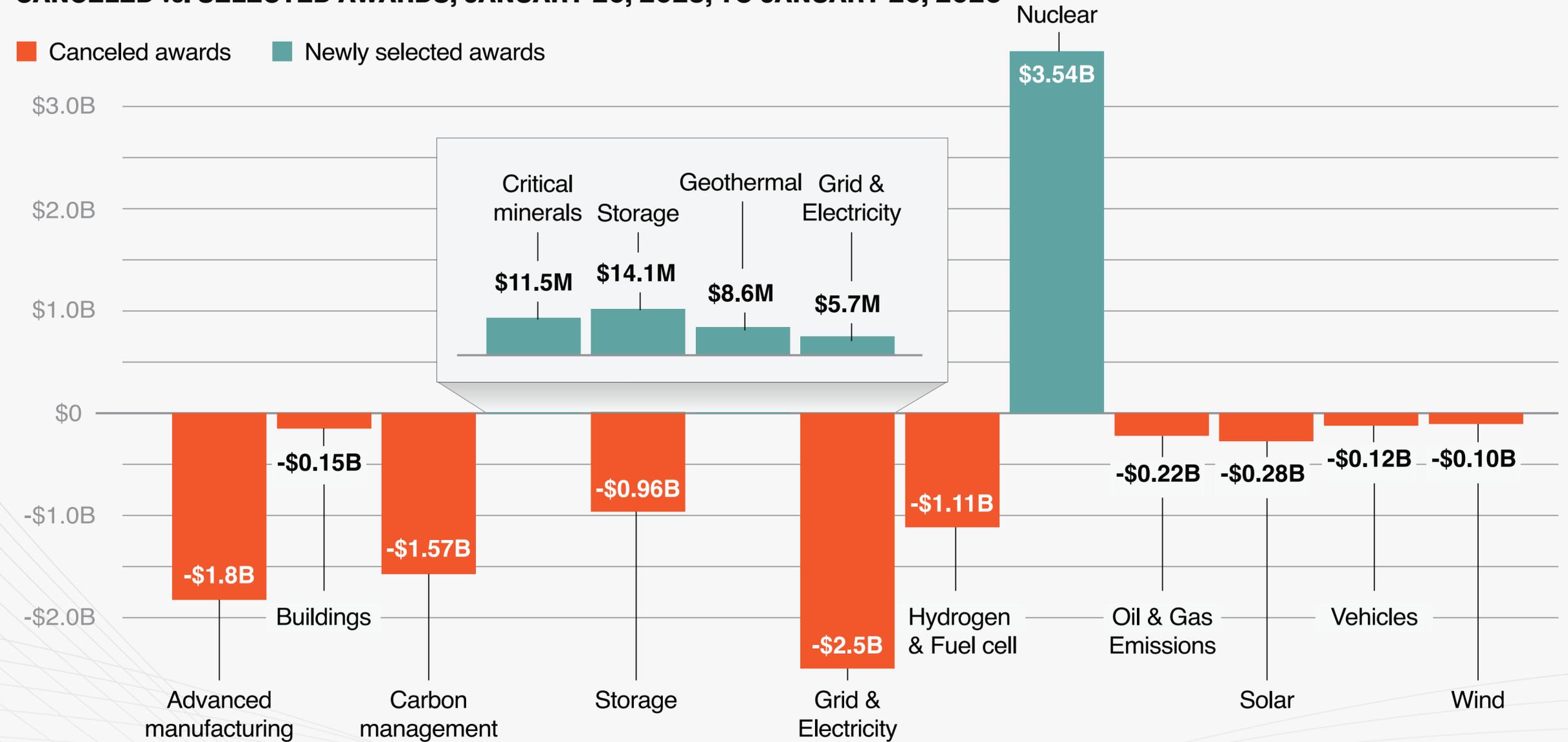


Notes: Data are from USASpending.gov, Grants.gov, FedConnect.gov, and DOE's press releases. Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) issued before January 20, 2025 but amended after are included in the planned funding numbers, as are Notices of Intent (NOIs). Solicitations without funding, such as Requests for Information (RFIs) and the Nuclear Reactor Pilot Program, were excluded from this figure. Cancellations are only included if publicly confirmed by DOE or award recipient. DOE alluded to a total of \$30 billion in loan guarantee cancellations on January 22, 2026 without providing further details. Cancellations initiated by recipients are not included in this data. Data reflect DOE's funding activities from January 20, 2025, to January 20, 2026.

Nuclear Emerged as a Key Priority with Modest Support for a Few Others

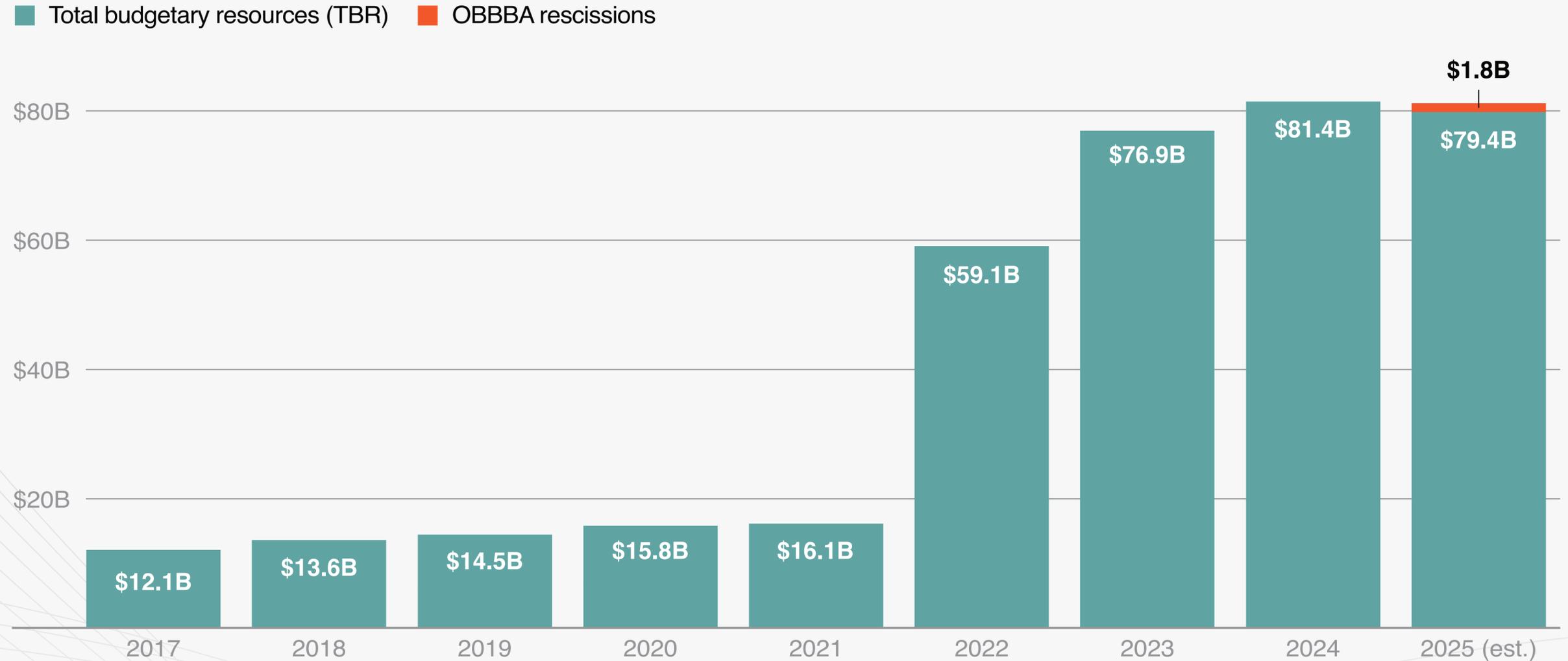
Figure 2.

CANCELED vs. SELECTED AWARDS, JANUARY 20, 2025, TO JANUARY 20, 2026



DOE Still Holds Significantly More Funding Than Its Historical Average

Figure 3. TOTAL BUDGETARY RESOURCES FOR DOE'S SCIENCE AND ENERGY INNOVATION OFFICES (EXCLUDING LPO), 2017-2025

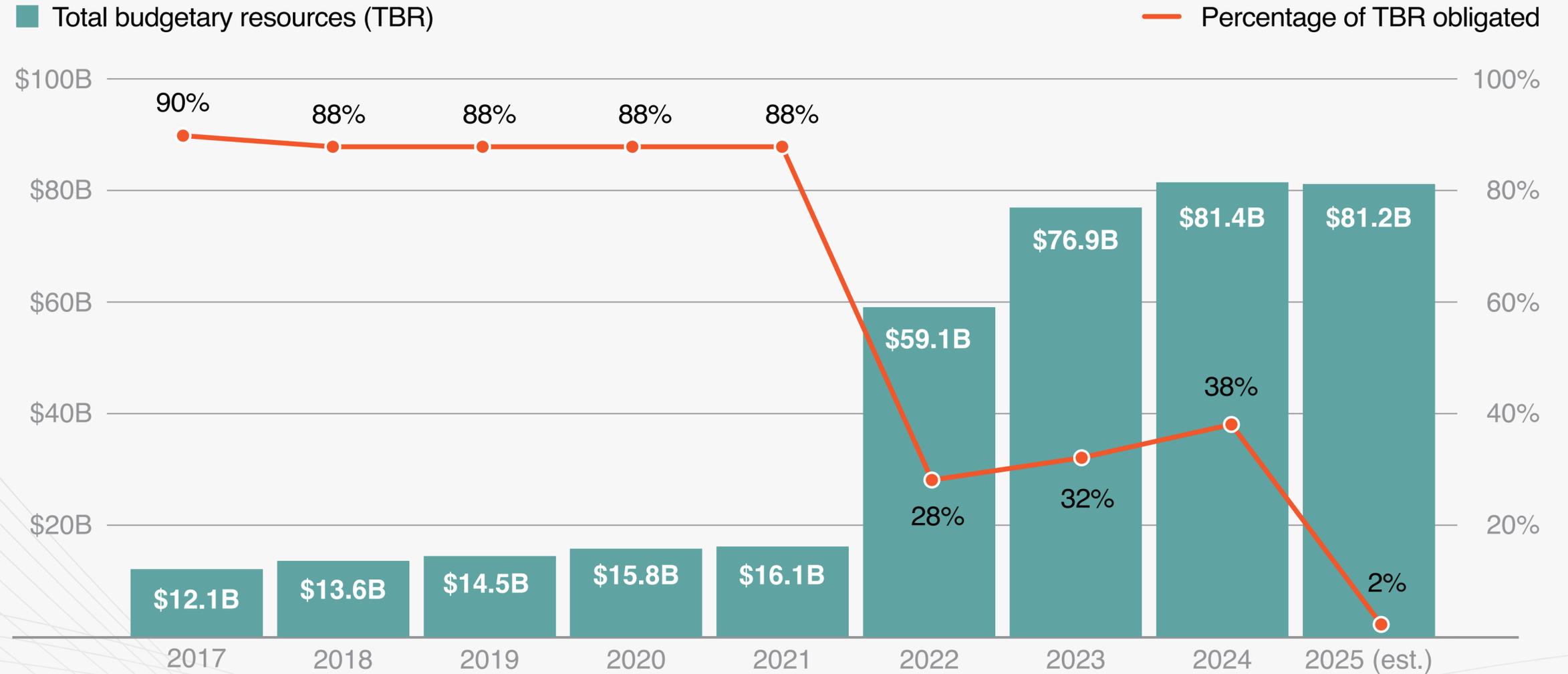


FY22-FY25 budget increases mostly come from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law; these funds have no expiration date and are available until expended.

Notes: "Total budgetary resources" include DOE's full obligational authority in a given fiscal year, including appropriations, unobligated carryover balances, and authority from offsetting collections. Data in this graph were collected from budget requests prepared by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, covering fiscal years 2017 through 2026. OBBBA rescinded unobligated balances from select Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) programs. Rescission amounts were estimated by identifying Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) issued under the affected IRA programs and calculating obligations reported for those FOAs in USASpending.gov. The total obligated amounts were then subtracted from the original IRA appropriations for each program; the resulting residual represents the estimated rescinded unobligated balances.

DOE Spent Less Than 2% of Its Substantial Total Available Resources in 2025

Figure 4. DOE's TOTAL AVAILABLE BUDGET vs. PERCENT OF BUDGET OBLIGATED

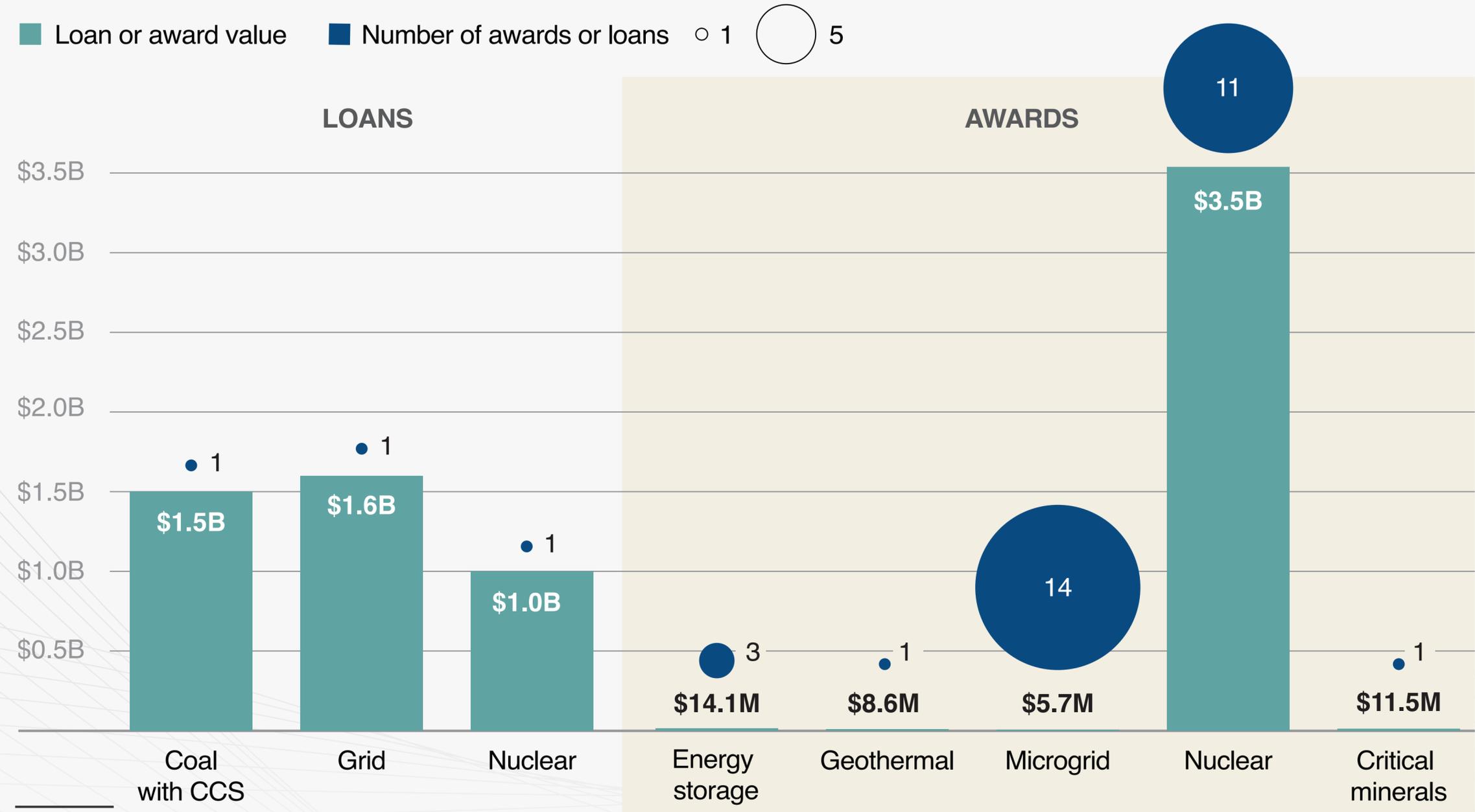


In 2025, DOE's science and energy innovation offices obligated \$1.6 billion in funding.

This reflects a sustained decline in DOE's rate of obligation, a measure of how quickly and at what scale funding is deployed to projects.

DOE's 2025 Award Selections and Closed Loans Show Preferred Technologies

Figure 5. DOE AWARD AND LOAN SELECTIONS FROM JANUARY 20, 2025, TO JANUARY 20, 2026



Although DOE finalized a \$1.6 billion loan guarantee focused on grid reliability with AEP in October 2025, the department also canceled a \$4.9 billion conditional loan guarantee for the Grain Belt Express project in July (slide 8).

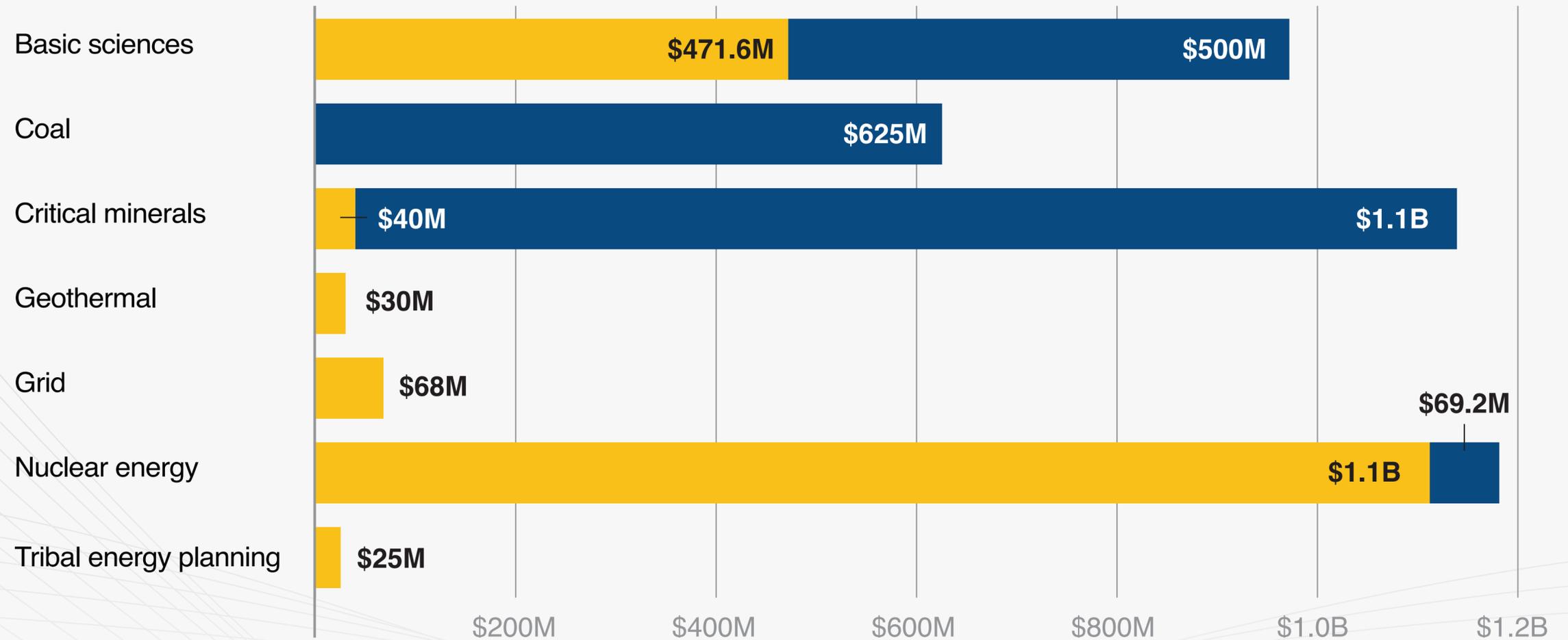
Notes: For 2025 loans, grid represents a loan guarantee. Coal with CCS and nuclear are loans. (a) Data are from DOE press releases. Awards without funding, such as the Nuclear Reactor Pilot Program, were excluded from this figure. (b) Data are from DOE press releases.

DOE Is Investing Heavily in a Few Funding Opportunities

Figure 6. SOLICITATIONS FROM JANUARY 20, 2025, TO JANUARY 20, 2026

FOAs and NOIs published or amended since January 2025

Amended New

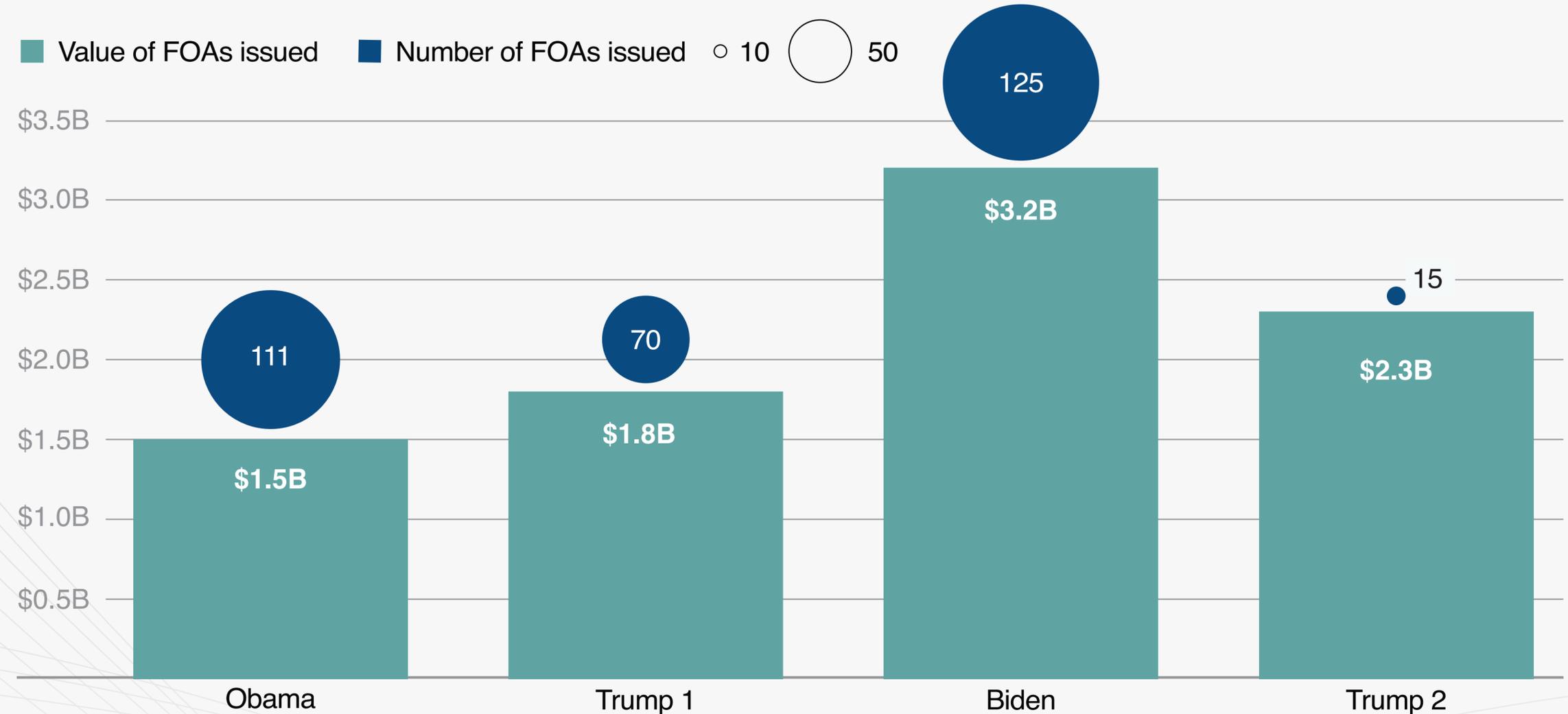


Notes: Data are from Grants.gov and DOE's press releases. Funding Opportunity Announcements (FOAs) issued before January 20, 2025 but amended after are considered "amended." FOAs and Notices of Intent (NOIs) issued after January 20, 2025 are considered "new." Solicitations without funding, such as Requests for Information (RFIs) and the Nuclear Reactor Pilot Program, were excluded from this figure. Data reflect DOE's science and energy innovation offices, excluding LPO. See page 22 for full list of science and energy innovation offices.

The Second Trump Administration Issued Relatively Few Solicitations in Year One

Figure 7.

COMPARISON OF YEAR-ONE FOAs ACROSS OBAMA, BIDEN, AND TRUMP ADMINISTRATIONS

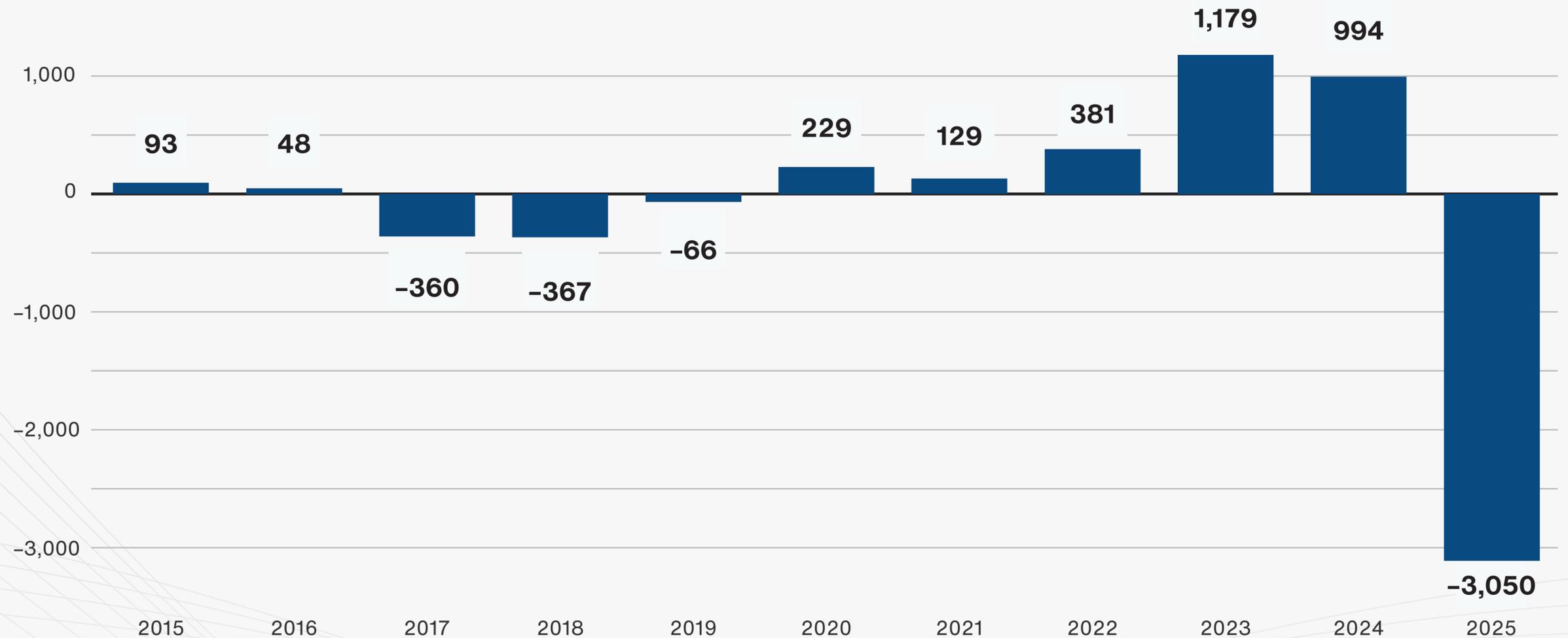


Although the second Trump administration has over five times more budget than the first, it solicited only about 1.3 times more grant funding with new FOAs.

DOE's Unprecedented Workforce Cuts May Play a Role in the Department's Limited Spending

Figure 8. HISTORICAL CHANGES IN DOE STAFFING LEVELS

Year-over-year changes in reported DOE staff levels in September of each year.



DOE now faces the largest budget-to-staff imbalance in its history, with fewer personnel overseeing far more funding than in prior administrations.

Workforce cuts introduce execution risk that cannot be resolved quickly, even if leadership later decides to accelerate spending.

The Trump Administration Adopted a Command-and-Control Approach to Energy Policy

The White House Has Taken a More Directive Role in Energy Decision Making

- The White House issued 17 presidential executive orders directing energy policy and implementation.
- The Office of Management and Budget exercised stronger influence over regulatory review and program scope.
- The National Energy Dominance Council was assigned to lead coordination across the government, chaired by the Secretary of Interior and vice-chaired by the Secretary of Energy.
- Independent regulators (e.g., NRC, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission [FERC]) face increased pressure to align with administration priorities.

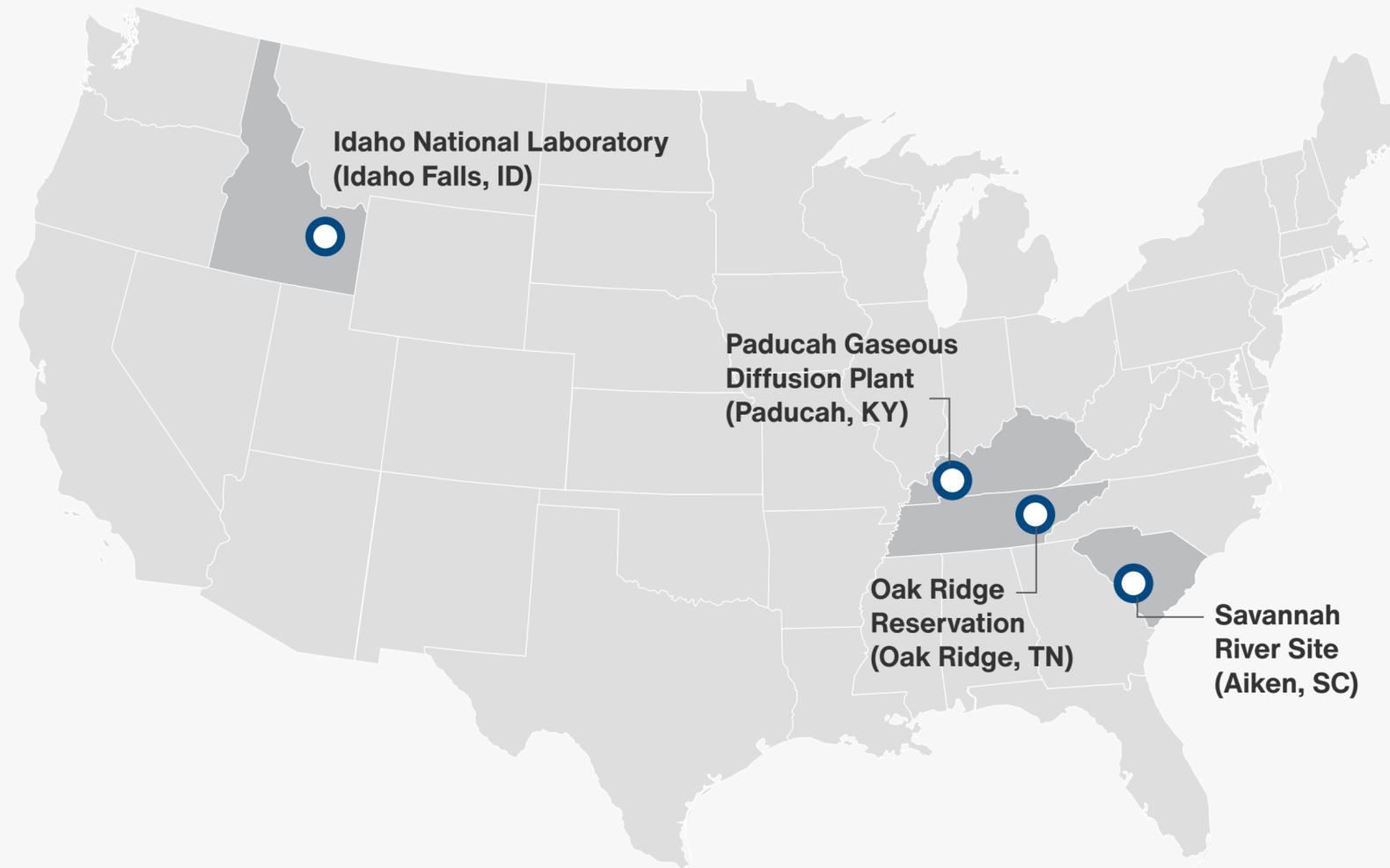


An Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking Signals Willingness to Reshape Traditional Regulatory Boundaries

- FERC is revisiting its rules for integrating large new loads into the power system—an area traditionally governed through a commission-led process—challenging state regulators with direction from DOE.

For Priority Technologies, the Administration Has Shown a Willingness to Use Nontraditional Federal Support Tools

Figure 9. DOE's SELECTED SITES FOR AI DATA CENTERS ON FEDERAL LAND



DOE plans to use Other Transactions (OT) agreements to implement many of these strategies

Equity and Risk

- The administration has shifted its focus to acting as a strategic investor, making taxpayers an interested party in both downside risk and upside potential.
- Through loan programs, DOE took equity shares in Lithium Americas, in parallel with other agencies' equity decisions.

Federal Land as a Deployment Tool

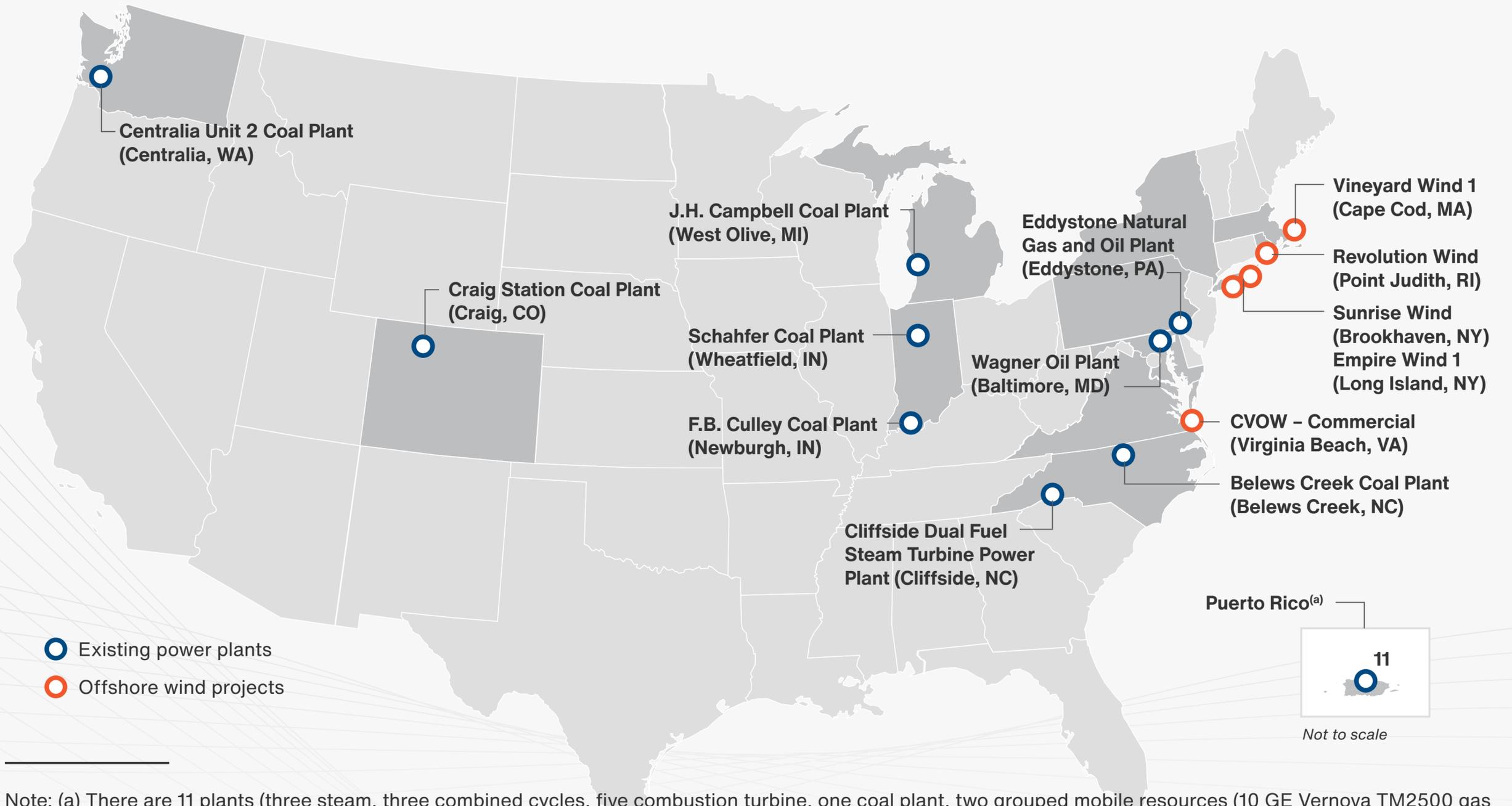
- DOE announced a plan to use federal land to accelerate AI and energy infrastructure, pairing site identification with streamlined federal processes.
- In 2025, DOE identified 16 candidate sites, issued an industry RFI, and announced a reactor demo pilot program intended to fast-track deployment outside traditional Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) pathways.
- Fast-tracking licensing and permitting on federal lands raises concerns about avoiding traditional regulatory pathways.

The Administration Used Emergency Authorities to Direct Outcomes

Figure 10. DOE's EMERGENCY AUTHORITY USE AND DOI's STOP WORK ORDERS UNDER TRUMP 2.0

DOE directed 20 power plants to remain operational, even in cases where utilities or regulators stated that grid models showed adequate reliability. This, in many cases, increased costs to the utilities.

Meanwhile, the Department of Interior (DOI) paused five offshore wind permits for projects already under construction. All five projects challenged DOI in court and won preliminary injunctions.



Note: (a) There are 11 plants (three steam, three combined cycles, five combustion turbine, one coal plant, two grouped mobile resources (10 GE Vernova TM2500 gas turbines and six diesel generator units) in Puerto Rico (Aguirre, Costa Sur, Central San Juan, Palo Seco, Cambalache, Mayaguez, Jobos, and Daguao).

Restructuring Suggests Emerging Priorities

On November 20, 2025, DOE announced a departmental restructuring and new organizational chart.^(a)

REMOVED OFFICES

(programs now distributed across CMEI and OE).

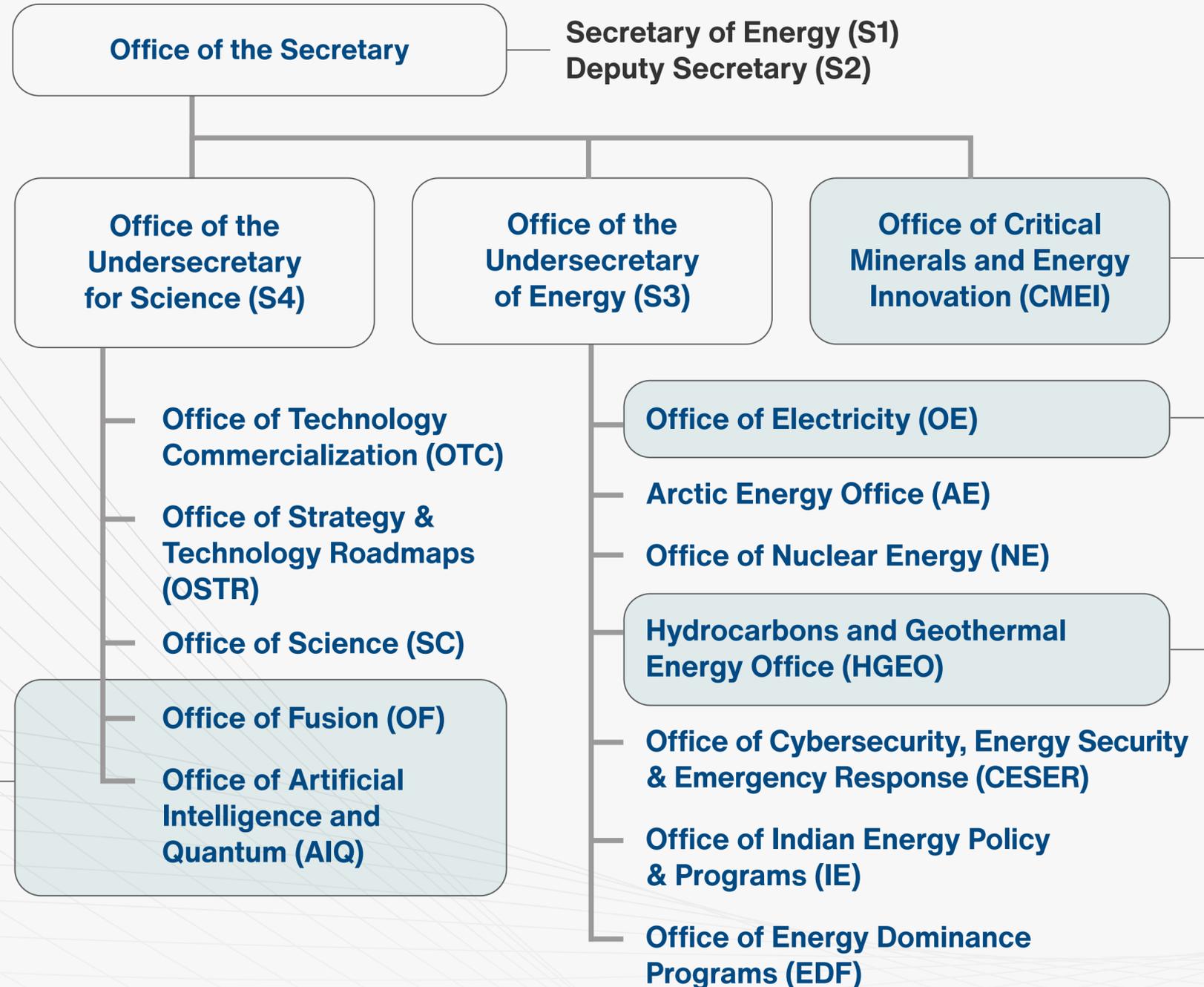
OCED

SCEP

EERE

GDO

NEW OFFICES



NEW LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES

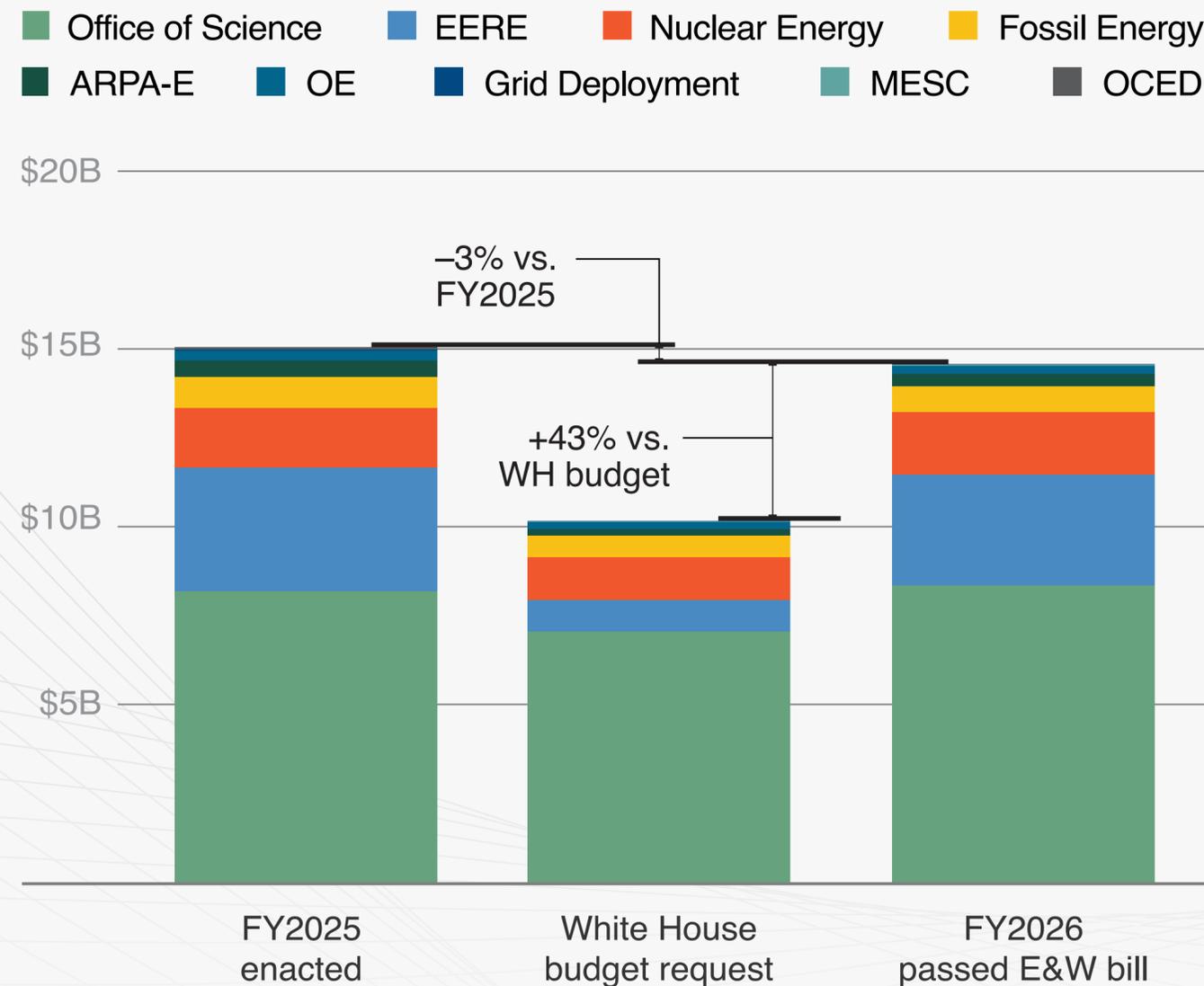
- **The Under Secretary for Energy (S3)** has replaced the Biden DOE's Under Secretary for Infrastructure. S3 will implement key aspects of the energy dominance agenda, including administering loan programs, modernizing the power grid, and coordinating geothermal technologies.
- **The Undersecretary for Science (S4)**, previously the Under Secretary for Science and Innovation under the Biden administration, will lead implementation of the Trump administration's AI and fusion priorities.
- Office of Critical Minerals and Energy Innovation (CMEI) now covers portfolios previously held by MESC, AMMTO, VTO, and most renewable energy programs (EERE). *Reports directly to the secretary and not to S3.*

RESTRUCTURED OFFICES

- Though EERE is no longer on DOE's organizational chart, Congress appropriated \$3.1 billion to EERE for FY26.
- Hydrocarbons and Geothermal Energy Office covers programs previously housed in FECM and EERE's Geothermal Technologies Office.

Congress Passed FY 2026 Appropriations that Support DOE's Nuclear and Grid Efforts and Reject Major Program Cuts and Project Terminations

Figure 11. COMPARING PASSED FY26 E&W BILL WITH PRESIDENT'S PROPOSAL AND FY25 FUNDING FOR SCIENCE AND ENERGY INNOVATION OFFICES



- The passed energy and water (E&W) bill includes DOE's FY 2026 appropriations of \$14.632 billion, a **3% reduction from FY 2025** levels, yet a **43% increase** from the president's proposal.
- **The bill includes guardrails on future project terminations**, with direction that states: DOE "shall not terminate a federal award ... on the basis that the federal award no longer effectuates program goals or agency priorities."
- **The bill reprograms \$5.16 billion of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding at DOE** in part for new Generation III+ small modular reactors and ongoing advanced reactor pilot projects (\$3.1 billion) and loans for small modular reactors or advanced reactors (\$0.15 billion).

CONCLUSION

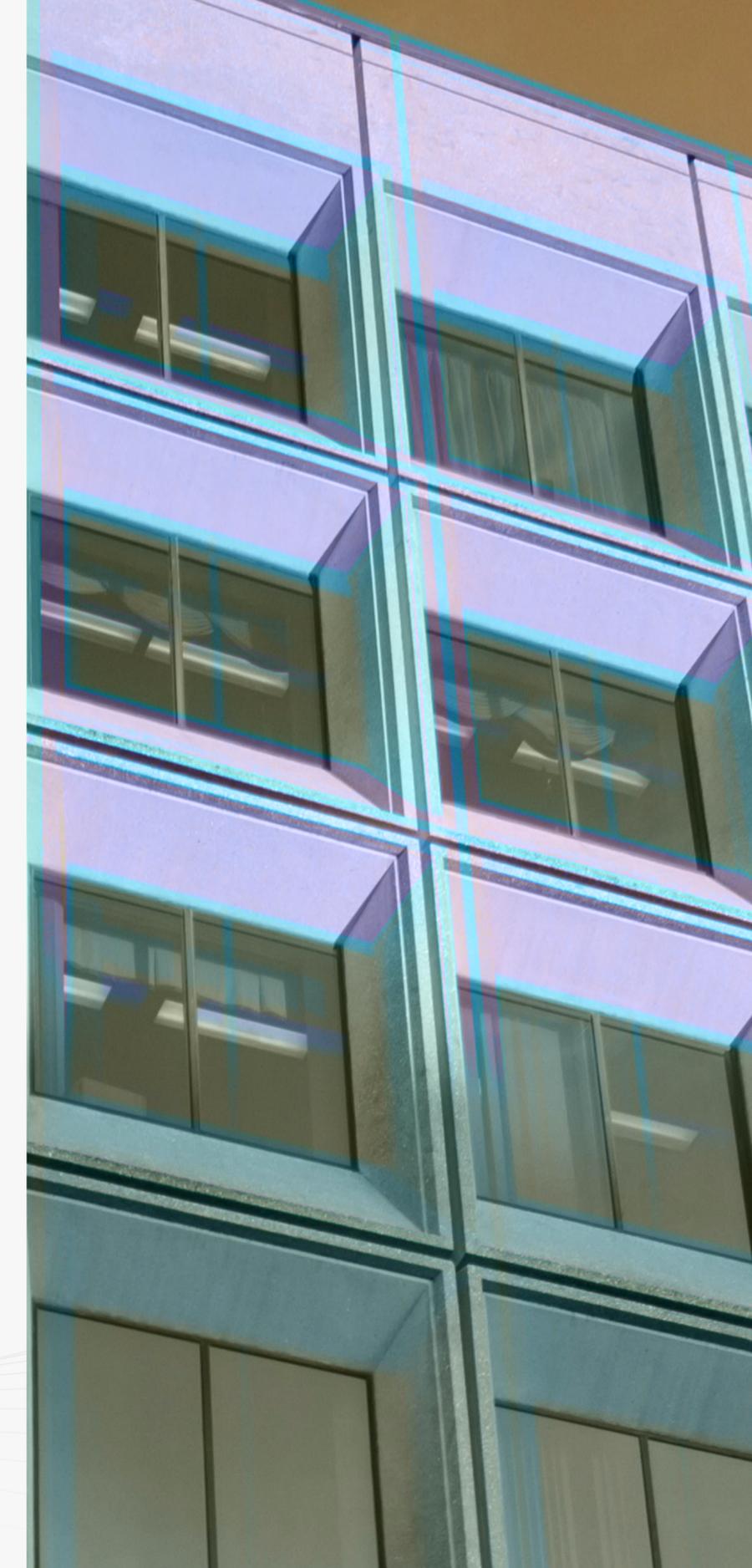
An Unclear Path Forward

2025 brought significant changes to DOE and its programs with a large reorganization highlighting possible future technology priorities, including critical minerals and grid technologies. Yet the loss of over 3,000 staff via the DRP raises questions over the department's ability to pursue these goals in the coming years. DOE staff, which accounts for such a small portion of its budget (2.2% in FY 2024), is critical to ramping up the execution of new deals, and new types of deals via OT contracts.

In terms of policy, OBBBA was the major initiative in the second Trump administration's first year. While its impact on energy funding (\$1.8 billion in rescissions) is relatively minor compared to DOE's total budgetary resources (\$80 billion), OBBBA created important changes to the loans programs, including rescinding \$8 billion in unobligated credit subsidy across key programs and increasing credit subsidy in the

1706 program, which was renamed Energy Dominance Financing. How the department may leverage the expanded eligibility and new authorities in the loan program remains to be seen.

DOE's sweeping cancellations of 345 awards last year, totaling over \$11 billion and including a broad swath of technologies, creates arguably the most uncertainty. Many types of projects were canceled, such as grid storage and advanced manufacturing, that appear part of this administration's plans. Meanwhile, less than 2% of DOE's total budgetary resources were obligated in 2025, largely on nuclear projects and programs. In the coming years, will the administration be able to leverage DOE's historically large budget to support their technology priorities, or continue to rely on nonmonetary tools with a command-and-control approach? The future of DOE public-private partnerships, energy affordability and reliability, and American energy innovation all hang in the balance.



Our Approach (1 OF 2)

This progress report provides an analysis of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) spending, staffing, and implementation across key programs during the period of January 20, 2025 through January 20, 2026.

The analysis focuses on DOE's "science and energy innovation programs" impacted by recent legislation:

- Advanced Research Projects Agency—Energy (ARPA-E)
- Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE)
- Office of Fossil Energy and Carbon Management (FECM)
- Office of Federal Energy Management Programs (FEMP)
- Grid Deployment Office (GDO)
- Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs (IE)
- Loan Programs Office (LPO)
- Office of Manufacturing and Energy Supply Chains (MESCC)
- Office of Nuclear Energy (NE)
- Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED)
- Office of Electricity (OE)
- Office of State and Community Energy Programs (SCEP)
- Office of Technology Transitions/Commercialization (OTC, formerly OTT)
- Office of Science (SC)

This work uses OMB's **total budgetary resources (TBR) metric for estimating the funding available to DOE offices** in a given fiscal year. DOE's TBR include:

1. New annual appropriations
2. Advance appropriations (such as from BIL and IRA)
3. Unobligated carryover balances
4. Spending authority from offsetting revenue
5. Authority to borrow from the Treasury

TBR, which combines all available funding, is an appropriate measure for comparing DOE's workload, as focusing solely on new appropriations ignores unspent balances and projects being actively managed by DOE. This analysis examines **loan authority** separately from TBR, unless noted, due to the differences between grants, contracts, and loans.

The analysis of staffing levels focuses on **federal employees**, using OMB's measure of "civilian **full-time equivalent employment**" (FTEs). An FTE is the equivalent of one full-time employee working a full year and could represent multiple part-time workers. This analysis also outlines what DOE spends on contractors each year. Note that federal employees manage contracts and contractors.

Our Approach (2 OF 2)

This analysis divides funding by Treasury Account Symbols, which often—but do not always—correspond to offices within DOE. Some offices, including loan programs, administer multiple accounts.

In some cases, offices are combined in this analysis when programs have migrated from one account to another (namely OE with GDO and EERE with FEMP, SCEP, and manufacturing programs). This analysis does not include accounts for “Departmental Administration,” which may contribute to energy and innovation programs.

The main data sources for this analysis are:

- The U.S. Department of the Treasury’s USAspending.gov database and budget requests prepared by OMB, covering Fiscal Years 2017 through 2026. For loan programs, data comes from U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) and DOE’s public website.
- Data on awards canceled October 2, 2025 come from a House Appropriations Committee Democrats press release, which contained award amount data for the canceled projects, obtained from DOE. The EFI Foundation verified this dataset by reviewing press releases from recipients and DOE for the top 26 canceled projects by award amount, and—finding no errors—determined the dataset to be reliable. View the press release here: democrats-appropriations.house.gov/doe.
- Project activity location data are from recipient press releases, media coverage, DOE press releases, and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) determination documents.