

**Remarks prepared for  
Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman  
Department of Energy All-Hands Meeting  
Thursday, February 3, 2005**

Good afternoon, and thanks to all of you for being here. I am extremely pleased to be with you today, and to finally be finished with the confirmation hearing process – so I can get started with the budget hearing process.

And while I can see that the budget is going to require a great amount of time and attention over the next few weeks, I also want to devote as much time and attention as possible to getting to know all of you and becoming more familiar with the very important work that lies ahead of us here at the Department of Energy.

So let me start off by saying that I consider it to be a personal and professional honor to have the chance to work with all of you. The Department of Energy, with its critical national and economic security missions, is one of our most important federal agencies. Let me also acknowledge the tremendous dedication and many accomplishments of my predecessor, Spencer Abraham. I look forward to building on his and Deputy Secretary McSlarrow's leadership and significant achievements across this Department.

As some of you may know, I was educated as a chemical engineer, and I started my career as an engineering professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. I

went on to work as an executive in both the finance and chemical industries. Most recently, I had the wonderful opportunity to serve the American people alongside the dedicated and talented employees of both the Commerce Department and the Treasury Department.

But throughout my career, I like to think that I have held on to the perspective of an engineer. And that's one of the many reasons why I am so glad to be here at this department, with its world-renowned accomplishments and leadership in the physical sciences.

My engineering background also might give you some insight into my management style. The way I see it, my job is to identify opportunities and challenges and to empower results. In other words, I want to help you get things done right... and help you get the credit you deserve.

As I begin my third assignment at a federal agency, I see that while structures and responsibilities of government departments can be quite different, there are some similarities as well. One thing that's common to all departments – or that certainly should be common to all of them – is the concern for the health and safety of employees. This is particularly important for agencies such as the DOE, with our high-tech science facilities, our large environmental cleanup operations, our work with nuclear materials, and our major construction projects.

I want each and every employee of this department – whatever your job – to know that your personal safety and security is extremely important to me. As evidence of that, I have asked members of the Department’s Office of Environmental Safety & Health to be here in the auditorium today. As the leader of this department, I believe it is my moral and ethical responsibility to take this seriously... and I do. I also take it personally.

Let me give you an example. When I first arrived at the Commerce Department in 2001, one of the first things I did was tour the building – just across the Mall on Constitution Avenue. I can tell you that I was not pleased with what I saw. I started by touring the basement, where I found live wires hanging from the ceilings, trash cans full of oily rags, leaky pipes, and all sorts of other safety hazards. We made some changes, right away.

At that time, I was told: “You don’t have to worry about NOAA – the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; they have an exemplary safety program.” I accepted that at face value – which was a mistake; I shouldn’t have. In the summer of 2002, we lost a NOAA employee, a seaman aboard a Commerce ship off the coast of Alaska. I took this very personally. It was on my watch. It was a preventable accident, but procedures had not been followed. Changes were made, and I am pleased to see a renewed focus at NOAA and at the Commerce Department.

My point is that when it comes to our collective safety, we must never lapse into complacency. Complacency is sometimes built into the standard way of doing things. Complacency is safety's enemy.

To every manager and supervisor, I ask you to pay special attention to the safety and security of your colleagues. I ask everyone here – and those watching throughout the country – to join me in making this a top priority.

With that said, I want to emphasize again how pleased and honored I am to have this opportunity. As I said in my confirmation hearing before the Senate, I believe – as I'm sure many of you do – that the Department of Energy is indeed one of our most important federal agencies.

But we also know that sometimes DOE is not well understood by much of the public. That might be partly a result of our name – which really doesn't do justice to the broad spectrum of the department's scientific and national defense responsibilities – and because of the highly classified nature of much of the work that goes on here.

Some people – including some of you – have told me this agency might be more appropriately called the “Department of Energy, Nuclear Defense, Science and Technology.” And if that were indeed the official name, perhaps the department would be in the news more often than just during times of power blackouts or high gas prices.

Because of my engineering background, I'm particularly fond of one of the missions that goes beyond the "Department of Energy" name – the mission of maintaining America's world leadership in science. Even though science is not part of our official title, this department is the primary federal agency conducting basic research in the physical sciences

DOE research is helping us gain a more fundamental understanding of nature and the makeup of our universe – investigating the basic constituents of matter and the forces that control them. In addition, our National Laboratories are world leaders in genomic research for energy, environmental and medical applications... and in supercomputing, which is taking mathematical computation to levels never imagined before... and in the development of nano-scale science, which holds the promise for an amazing array of discoveries that could revolutionize so many aspects of our lives.

Each year, thousands of researchers from around the nation, and the world, work with the DOE National Laboratories. And this work has led to some of the most important scientific discoveries and breakthroughs of the past several decades. Scientists working with the DOE National Labs over the years have been awarded more than 80 Nobel Prizes. No other organization anywhere even comes close to that – and it's something we all should be extremely proud of.

I also am excited about pursuing the department's better-known mission of helping ensure that America has the energy we need for our growing economy. As we

know, the last Congress came very close to enacting comprehensive energy legislation that addresses many of the critical energy challenges facing our nation.

Those issues include expanding our domestic production of traditional energy resources, modernizing our energy infrastructure, expanding our use of renewable energy, improving energy efficiency, and pursuing new energy technologies to help reduce pollution and lessen America's dependence on foreign oil.

As we heard in the State of the Union address last night, the President is making energy legislation a key priority. We heard the President specifically mention nuclear energy, clean coal technologies, hydrogen cars, alternative energy sources, and improvements to the electricity grid – all key areas of focus for this department.

I look forward to working with all of you – as well as with members of Congress – to finally pass a comprehensive energy bill, which is so vitally important to the future of our nation.

I'm also looking forward to working with the people here in the area of national defense. Since the beginning of our Administration four years ago, this department has made great progress in upgrading the capabilities of our nation's nuclear weapons complex and the facilities that support it. I look forward to continuing that progress.

In addition, I believe that we can build upon the department's impressive achievements in nuclear nonproliferation. Few things are more critical in today's world than keeping weapons-usable nuclear material from falling into the wrong hands.

Toward this goal, we will continue our efforts to equip ports and border crossings with radiation-detection devices... we will keep working with Russia and other nations to secure nuclear material around the world... and we will press ahead with programs such as finding new jobs for former Soviet weapons scientists... and programs to convert weapons-usable material into commercial reactor fuel.

Closely related to the department's nuclear defense mission is the cleanup of various sites around the United States that have been contaminated through the development of our nuclear capability. Over the past four years, this department has revamped the massive cleanup process for these sites, reducing the timetable by 35 years and saving taxpayers about \$50 billion. We should all be very proud of this accomplishment, which is a truly stellar example of another mission that every federal department should have -- making the best possible use of the taxpayers' money. And that, of course, will always be one of our primary areas of focus.

Let me close by thanking you for your dedicated service. It is already clear to me that your hard work makes a difference to this department and to the nation. I would also say that I recognize that with new leadership also comes change. And – even for federal employees, who are accustomed to transition – change is not always easy.

Let me digress for a minute on this topic. Whenever I deal with departmental budgets, I like to start out with a reading from *The Prince* by Machiavelli... written five centuries ago, but eerily relevant to modern-day Washington. Machiavelli said: “It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle, than to initiate a new order of things.”

But, working together, I believe that we will meet – and exceed – our goals and tackle any challenges that lie ahead. In so doing, you will help to advance the key missions of this great department.

With that, I’d like to thank all of you again for being here today.

# # # #