

U.S. Department of Commerce
Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Advisory Committee
Fourth Charter, 2016-2018

May 10, 2018
In-Person Meeting #7
Commerce Library Reading Room (Rm 1894)
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

MEETING MINUTES

Welcome, Introductions, Updates, & Approval of Meeting Minutes

Cindy Thyfault, REEEAC Chair (remotely)

- Ms. Thyfault welcomed the Committee to the final in-person meeting under Charter IV. She apologized she was not able to attend in person.
- She noted the good work of the members, congratulated them on a successful charter, and thanked them for their hard work.

Scott Sklar, REEEAC Vice Chair

- Mr. Sklar noted he would be Chairing the meeting today in Ms. Thyfault's absence.
- He noted that together with Ms. Thyfault – and per discussion during the previous in-person meeting – they drafted a proposed letter to the potential Charter V REEEAC members and it was included in the distributed information packet.
- Mr. Sklar asked the members for comments or edits to the document. He noted that all of the edits received over the last week (electronically) were incorporated into the current draft.
- No members offered additional edits.
- Mr. Sklar asked the members to vote on the letter. It was approved unanimously.
- Mr. Sklar highlighted that today the agenda includes briefings for senior U.S. Government officials. He noted that given time constraints we will not be able to brief each official on all the recommendations the committee has made. Instead, he proposed highlighting a couple of key recommendations for each official. Mr. Sklar asked for guidance on the recommendations to raise with DOE, State, and USDA.
- The REEEAC members outlined the briefings and assigned speaking roles.

Vickie Gunderson, Designated Federal Officer of the REEEAC, U.S. Department of Commerce

- Ms. Gunderson opened by thanking the Committee for their service.
- She proceeded to highlight the work of the group – number of meetings, subcommittee meetings, letters approved, and recommendations approved.
- She underscored that today's meeting is an opportunity to highlight the REEEAC's accomplishments and garner support for potential implementation.

REEEAC Briefing for U.S. Department of Energy

- Mr. Sklar welcomed Daniel Simmons from the Department of Energy (DOE) and provided a brief background on the REEEAC.

- Ms. Gunderson introduced the members of the Committee.

Daniel Simmons, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency, U.S. Department of Energy

- Mr. Simmons offered introductory remarks on his role within DOE and the Office of Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (EERE).
- He noted the focus on early-stage research at DOE.
- He emphasized that primary goals of DOE/EERE include driving down costs of new energy technologies, focusing on effectively integrating renewables onto the grid, and leveraging technologies such as storage to increase electricity system reliability.
- Mr. Sklar moderated the remainder of the discussion and facilitated the briefing by the Committee.
- Jonathan Stewart discussed recommendations #7 and #8 and emphasized the importance of standards in global markets and market access for U.S. firms.
- Mr. Sklar and Joseph Mendelson discussed recommendation #9 related to enhancing industry coordination and outreach on natural disaster response in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

REEEAC Briefing for U.S. Department of State

- Mr. Sklar welcomed John McCarrick from the Department of State and provided a brief background on the REEEAC.
- Ms. Gunderson introduced the members of the Committee.

John McCarrick, Acting Special Envoy and Coordinator for International Energy Affairs, Bureau of Energy Resources, U.S. Department of State

- Mr. McCarrick delivered an introduction to himself and his role at the Department of State. He underscored the importance of exports to foreign energy policy goals. He expressed interest in hearing more about the Committee's recommendations.
- Mr. Sklar moderated the remainder of the discussion and facilitated the briefing by the Committee.
- Mr. Slav Gatchev provided an overview of recommendation #1 and #3 regarding financing of energy projects.
- Mr. Ken Kramer discussed recommendation #2 as it related to the Administration's messaging on energy policy.
- Mr. McCarrick asked about gaps the industry is seeing and related to messaging.
- Mr. Trey Taylor highlighted the recent event with Japan the Department of State organized as a productive public-private sector engagement.

REEEAC Briefing for U.S. Department of Agriculture

- Mr. Sklar welcomed Mr. Daniel Whitley from the Department of Agriculture and provided a brief background on the REEEAC.
- Ms. Gunderson introduced the members of the Committee.

Daniel Whitley, Acting Associate Administrator, Foreign Agricultural Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

- Mr. Whitley provided introductory remarks regarding the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) and its efforts to promote the export of ethanol. He noted the export and market intelligence that USDA collects from its global staff.
- Mr. Sklar moderated the remainder of the discussion and facilitated the briefing by the Committee.
- Ms. Kelly Davis provided an overview of recommendation #10 regarding ethanol exports to India.
- Ms. Thyfault highlighted the REEEAC efforts and interest to implement recommendations from Charter III regarding the implementation of training programs for U.S. Government staff.
- Mr. Whitley noted that this could be an opportunity for collaboration as USDA brings its FAS senior staff and local staff to DC for training multiple times a year.

Working Lunch: REEEAC Briefing for DOC Leadership

- Mr. Sklar welcomed Mr. Daniel Whitley from the Department of Agriculture and provided a brief background on the REEEAC.
- Ms. Gunderson introduced the members of the Committee.

Nazak Nikakhtar, Assistant Secretary for Industry and Analysis, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

- Ms. Nikakhtar provided introductory remarks regarding priorities of the Department and the trade agenda.
- Mr. Sklar moderated the remainder of the discussion and facilitated the briefing by the Committee.
- Mr. Mendelson highlighted recommendation #4 and the importance of market access issues in the global market.
- Mr. Greg Merritt further emphasized the importance of global supply chains and its role in enabling U.S. firms to be cost competitive on the global marketplace.
- Ms. Nikakhtar noted that Department is looking for additional guidance on how supply chains affect U.S. competitiveness.
- Mr. Sklar suggested that should the REEEAC charter be renewed, the Committee could provide additional perspectives on this point.
- Mr. Kevin Smith provided a summary of recommendations #1 and #2.
- Ms. Nikakhtar indicated that additional specific examples on how to tailor U.S. Government messaging would be needed to fully implement recommendation #2.
- Mr. Matt Card provided an overview of recommendations #3, #7, and #8.
- Ms. Jen Derstine highlighted recommendations #6 and #5.
- Mr. Gary Rackliffe further underscored the importance of recommendations #7 and #8.

REEEAC IV Recommendation Discussion & Wrap-Up

Scott Sklar, REEEAC Vice Chair

- Mr. Sklar noted that there was remaining REEEAC business to attend including the approval of the February 22, 2018 meeting minutes. No edits were provided and the minutes were approved.
- Mr. Sklar noted there were two pending recommendations for Committee consideration.
- REEEAC members reviewed the recommendations. Not substantive edits were offered. The recommendations regarding webinars (“virtual trade missions”) as well as educational briefings for multilateral development institutions were both approved unanimously.

- The Committee then discussed and outlined the briefings for the Secretary and Under Secretary.
- Ms. Thyfault wrapped up the session by again, thanking the committee for their teamwork.

Public Comment

- Mr. Egils Milbergs, Member of the Public, offered a public comment. He noted his current role as a lead for a non-profit in the water sector and his previous role as a Deputy Assistant Secretary at DOC.
- He stated there were three key trade policy issues that have been consistent over time: (1) entrepreneurship; (2) importance of public-private partnerships; and (3) infrastructure as a path for investment.

Conversation with DOC Leadership: REEEAC IV Summary

- Mr. Sklar welcomed Mr. Daniel Whitley from the Department of Agriculture and provided a brief background on the REEEAC.
- Ms. Gunderson introduced the members of the Committee.

Ian Steff, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Manufacturing, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

- Mr. Steff welcomed the Committee, thanked them for their service, and introduced Mr. Kaplan.

Gil Kaplan, Under Secretary for International Trade, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce

- Mr. Kaplan provided introductory comments that thanked the Committee for their service. He highlighted the importance of fair trade, innovation, and workforce development as key priorities.
- Mr. Sklar moderated facilitated the briefing by the Committee.
- Mr. Mendelson highlighted recommendation #4 and the importance of market access issues in the global market.
- Mr. Greg Merritt further emphasized the importance of global supply chains and its role in enabling U.S. firms to be cost competitive on the global marketplace.
- Mr. Kevin Smith provided a summary of recommendations #1 and #3.
- Mr. Kaplan agreed that financing is an important element of export promotion and underscored the role of the DOC Advocacy Center in aiding U.S. exporters in tender winning.
- Mr. Kaplan further asked if recommendation #3 was a proposal for a new program, or an existing one.
- Mr. Gatchev noted it was a new program.
- Mr. Gary Rackliffe further underscored the importance of recommendations #6, #7, and #8.
- Mr. Kaplan inquired if the REEEAC had met with ITA's Standards Team.
- Mr. Sklar noted the group had met with them as well as NIST during previous meetings.
- Mr. Kaplan underscored the need to hear more about what ITA could do to help.
- Mr. Kaplan introduced the arrival of Secretary Wilbur Ross.

- Mr. Sklar thanked the Secretary for his attendance.
- Ms. Thyfault offered welcome remarks on behalf of the REEEAC.

Wilbur Ross, Secretary, U.S. Department of Commerce (3:35 PM Arrival)

- Mr. Ross provided opening remarks on the importance of fair and reciprocal trade.
- He underscored his commitment and importance to the REEEAC. He noted the REEEAC charter's renewal was under review and amid the "bureaucratic" process.
- Mr. Ross highlighted the importance of timely advice and thanked the Committee members for their service.

- Mr. Sklar moderated facilitated the briefing by the Committee.
- Mr. Mendelson highlighted recommendation #4 and the importance of market access issues in the global market.
- Mr. Kevin Smith provided a summary of recommendations #1 and #3.

Adjourn

- REEEAC meeting was adjourned.