The Secretary of Energy
Washington, DC 20585

September 21, 2015

Mr. John Hofmeister, Chair
Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technical Advisory Committee
1302 Waugh Dr., #940
Houston, Texas 77019

Dear Mr. Hofmeister:

Thank you for your letter of May 28, 2015 accompanying the Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technical Advisory Committee's (HTAC) seventh annual report on the state of hydrogen and fuel cell commercialization and technical development. The Department values the input of the Committee and sincerely appreciates its annual reports and recommendations.

Your report outlines many advances in hydrogen and fuel cells over the past year and summarizes key challenges. The Department recognizes that emerging technologies face a number of obstacles and continues to pursue a balanced strategy across basic and applied research and development. We are also addressing institutional challenges, such as codes and standards and infrastructure, particularly through our public-private partnership, H2USA.

We have noted your specific recommendation on increasing the visibility of President Obama's proposed tax incentive for alternative fueled vehicles as outlined in his FY 2016 budget request. To address your suggestions, the Department plans to develop a summary document to publicize the proposed tax credits which would include fuel cell electric vehicles.

We also noted the importance you place on a strong government budget and I am pleased to report that the 2016 budget request for the Fuel Cell Technologies Office was $103 million, roughly 10 percent higher than the 2015 request of about $93 million. In addition, we pay close attention to international activities and participate actively in the International Partnership for Hydrogen and Fuel Cells in the Economy, a government partnership among 17 countries and the European Commission that is focused entirely on accelerating progress in hydrogen and fuel cells. Our efforts provide valuable insight to enable domestic competitiveness.

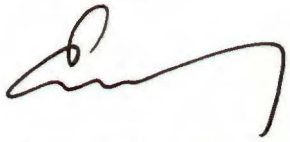
As you know from your engagement with the Department, funding for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy has enabled more than 515 U.S. patents, 40 commercial technologies in the market related to hydrogen and fuel cells, and another 65 technologies we anticipate to be commercial in the next three-to-five years. Examples include catalysts, electrolyzers, fuel cell components, hydrogen storage tanks and other technologies to enable the successful commercialization of hydrogen and fuel cells. The Department is also engaging in a grid crosscut activity, and will be further exploring the potential role of hydrogen as energy storage and fuel.

With Mr. Frank Novachek of Xcel Energy as the incoming Chair, we look forward to further engaging on hydrogen energy storage for both grid resiliency and fuel applications. Finally, we'd like to request that the Committee provide feedback on the Department's Hydrogen and Fuel Cells Program Plan. HTAC provided valuable input to the 2011 version of the Plan, and the Department intends to update the document now that our Quadrennial Technology Review is complete. Your rigorous evaluation and input will be important as we update our plans, goals, and milestones.

Thank you for your engagement as Chair of HTAC over the past three years and close interaction with the Department at multiple levels, including Dr. Franklin Orr, Under Secretary for Science and Energy; Dr. David Danielson, Assistant Secretary for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy; Reuben Sarkar, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Sustainable Transportation, and Dr. Sunita Satyapal, Director of the Fuel Cell Technologies Office.

I look forward to the Committee's continued reports regarding the state of hydrogen and fuel cell technologies. Please extend my gratitude to the Committee for its insightful and valuable contributions to the Department.

Sincerely,



Ernest J. Moniz

cc: Frank Novachek