

§ 2003. Methane hydrate research and development program

(a) In general

(1) Commencement of program

Not later than 90 days after August 8, 2005, the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Director, shall commence a program of methane hydrate research and development in accordance with this section.

(2) Designations

The Secretary, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Director shall designate individuals to carry out this section.

(3) Coordination

The individual designated by the Secretary shall coordinate all activities within the Department of Energy relating to methane hydrate research and development.

(4) Meetings

The individuals designated under paragraph (2) shall meet not later than 180 days after August 8, 2005, and not less frequently than every 180 days thereafter to—

(A) review the progress of the program under paragraph (1); and

(B) coordinate interagency research and partnership efforts in carrying out the program.

(b) Grants, contracts, cooperative agreements, interagency funds transfer agreements, and field work proposals

(1) Assistance and coordination

In carrying out the program of methane hydrate research and development authorized by this section, the Secretary may award grants to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements with, institutions of higher education, oceanographic institutions, and industrial enterprises to—

(A) conduct basic and applied research to identify, explore, assess, and develop methane hydrate as a commercially viable source of energy;

(B) identify methane hydrate resources through remote sensing;

(C) acquire and reprocess seismic data suitable for characterizing methane hydrate accumulations;

(D) assist in developing technologies required for efficient and environmentally sound development of methane hydrate resources;

(E) promote education and training in methane hydrate resource research and resource development through fellowships or other means for graduate education and training;

(F) conduct basic and applied research to assess and mitigate the environmental impact of hydrate degassing (including both natural degassing and degassing associated with commercial development);

(G) develop technologies to reduce the risks of drilling through methane hydrates; and

(H) conduct exploratory drilling, well testing, and production testing operations on permafrost and non-permafrost gas hydrates in support of the activities authorized by this paragraph, including drilling of one or more full-scale production test wells.

(2) Competitive peer review

Funds made available under paragraph (1) shall be made available based on a competitive process using external scientific peer review of proposed research.

(c) Methane hydrates advisory panel

(1) In general

The Secretary shall establish an advisory panel (including the hiring of appropriate staff) consisting of representatives of industrial enterprises, institutions of higher education, oceanographic institutions, State agencies, and environmental organizations with knowledge and expertise in the natural gas hydrates field, to—

(A) assist in developing recommendations and broad programmatic priorities for the methane hydrate research and development program carried out under subsection (a)(1);

(B) provide scientific oversight for the methane hydrates program, including assessing progress toward program goals, evaluating program balance, and providing recommendations to enhance the quality of the program over time; and

(C) not later than 2 years after August 8, 2005, and at such later dates as the panel considers advisable, submit to Congress—

(i) an assessment of the methane hydrate research program; and

(ii) an assessment of the 5-year research plan of the Department of Energy.

(2) Conflicts of interest

In appointing each member of the advisory panel established under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that the appointment of the member does not pose a conflict of interest with respect to the duties of the member under this chapter.

(3) Meetings

The advisory panel shall—

(A) hold the initial meeting of the advisory panel not later than 180 days after the date of establishment of the advisory panel; and

(B) meet biennially thereafter.

(4) Coordination

The advisory panel shall coordinate activities of the advisory panel with program managers of the Department of Energy at appropriate National Laboratories.

(d) Construction costs

None of the funds made available to carry out this section may be used for the construction of a new building or the acquisition, expansion, remodeling, or alteration of an existing building (including site grading and improvement and architect fees).

(e) Responsibilities of the Secretary

In carrying out subsection (b)(1), the Secretary shall—

(1) facilitate and develop partnerships among government, industrial enterprises, and institutions of higher education to research, identify, assess, and explore methane hydrate resources;

(2) undertake programs to develop basic information necessary for promoting long-term interest in methane hydrate resources as an energy source;

(3) ensure that the data and information developed through the program are accessible and widely disseminated as needed and appropriate;

(4) promote cooperation among agencies that are developing technologies that may hold promise for methane hydrate resource development;

(5) report annually to Congress on the results of actions taken to carry out this chapter; and

(6) ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, greater participation by the Department of Energy in international cooperative efforts.

(Pub. L. 106–193, § 4, as added Pub. L. 109–58, title IX, § 968(a), Aug. 8, 2005, 119 Stat. 895.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 4 of Pub. L. 106–193 was set out in a note under section 1902 of this title prior to the general amendment of Pub. L. 106–193 by Pub. L. 109–58.

§ 2004. National Research Council study

(a) Agreement for Study

The Secretary shall offer to enter into an agreement with the National Research Council under which the National Research Council shall—

(1) conduct a study of the progress made under the methane hydrate research and development program implemented under this chapter; and

(2) make recommendations for future methane hydrate research and development needs.

(b) Report

Not later than September 30, 2009, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report containing the findings and recommendations of the National Research Council under this section.

(Pub. L. 106–193, § 5, as added Pub. L. 109–58, title IX, § 968(a), Aug. 8, 2005, 119 Stat. 898.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 5 of Pub. L. 106–193 was set out in a note under section 1902 of this title prior to the general amendment of Pub. L. 106–193 by Pub. L. 109–58.

§ 2005. Reports and studies for Congress

The Secretary shall provide to the Committee on Science of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate copies of any report or study that the Department of Energy prepares at the direction of any committee of Congress relating to the methane hydrate research and development program implemented under this chapter.

(Pub. L. 106–193, § 6, as added Pub. L. 109–58, title IX, § 968(a), Aug. 8, 2005, 119 Stat. 898.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 6 of Pub. L. 106–193 was set out in a note under section 1902 of this title prior to the general amendment of Pub. L. 106–193 by Pub. L. 109–58.

Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

CHANGE OF NAME

Committee on Science of House of Representatives changed to Committee on Science and Technology of House of Representatives by House Resolution No. 6, One Hundred Tenth Congress, Jan. 5, 2007. Committee on Science and Technology of House of Representatives changed to Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of House of Representatives by House Resolution No. 5, One Hundred Twelfth Congress, Jan. 5, 2011.

§ 2006. Authorization of appropriations

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out this chapter, to remain available until expended—

(1) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2006;

(2) \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2007;

(3) \$30,000,000 for fiscal year 2008;

(4) \$40,000,000 for fiscal year 2009; and

(5) \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2010.

(Pub. L. 106–193, § 7, as added Pub. L. 109–58, title IX, § 968(a), Aug. 8, 2005, 119 Stat. 898.)

Editorial Notes

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 7 of Pub. L. 106–193 was set out in a note under section 1902 of this title prior to the general amendment of Pub. L. 106–193 by Pub. L. 109–58.