Senate Energy and Water Development Subcommittee Markup of the FY14 Budget
June 25, 2013

Webcast is at:

Comments related to Fusion research can be found at on the webcast:

In Feinstein's opening remarks (21:10 - 21:23):

"We provide no funding for a major fusion project known as ITER, until the Department provides this committee a baseline cost, schedule and scope."

Senator Landrieu made specific reference to fusion and the MIT project (including her visit) (39:42 - 40:57):

"And finally, this is a big issue. It's a little bit out of my lane, but I've learned about it, you know about it, Senator Alexander knows about it. I got a chance to visit MIT last week. I've been there, of course, before. I was very impressed with this fusion research that's going on. I mean, in short, solar energy is capturing the energy from the sun and bringing it to the earth. Fusion is creating the energy of the sun on the earth. It is an extraordinarily advanced and new cutting edge technology that countries are spending billions of dollars. I realize that we don't have a full plan from the administration, but there are, in California, not in Louisiana, California, MIT, and one other place. Let's see if I can find it here. Princeton, at Princeton, and then in California. In three places in the United States, we're spending several million dollars. I want to strongly support that research. The President moved some of that money out of the budget. This budget puts it back in, while holding off on any international investments. It's really exciting technology, so this could be a real opportunity for us, and to work with our international partners."

Senator Feinstein responds (41:57 - 42:50):

"With respect to fusion, I'm driven to say one thing. You mentioned the facility in my state. Well we've been waiting for a plan from the facility in my state for a long time now, and the goals have been missed, in terms of reaching fusion. Whether fusion can be reached or not, I think is the issue. But there is a lot of work to do, and I think the programs of even our most brilliant people haven't been able really to achieve it. So I guess what I want to say is 'we are watching, and watching carefully', and my hope is that, particularly the facility in California will be able to come up with a new plan, because we can't keep funding, if goals aren't reached."
**Senator Landrieu (42:51 - 43:12):**

"Well thank you, and I will acquiesce to your judgment, but I want to suggest a serious review of what's going on at MIT, because I walked through the facility and was very impressed with what they're doing, some of the finest scientists in the world, and they're very excited about the advances they're making."

**Senator Udall (43:17 - 43:33):**

"I've also visited that facility at MIT, and I think that this is a very exciting area of research and I think it's a good example that as we move forward we need to be looking at areas to do research in energy where we're going to break through in the future, and I think this is one of the ones that has real potential."

**Senator Feinstein (43:36 - 44:27):**

"Of course you're right, you're both right. But, look, huge amounts of money go into these projects, and the baseline has to be a correct assessment. The projects have to be managed. They have to have their goals set out. They have to reach those goals. I think it's time for this subcommittee to begin to drive that home, because sequestration is real. We will have to conference with the house. A lot of stuff no doubt will go out. But people really have to understand that on these big projects related to nuclear work, related to plutonium, related to uranium, related to clean-up, related to breaking new barriers, we have to reach the goals."