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REPORT BY THE

# Comptroller General

OF THE UNITED STATES

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## Use, Cost, Purpose, And Makeup Of Department Of Energy Advisory Committees

In an effort toward improving its Advisory Committee Management Program, the Department of Energy has reduced the number of its advisory committees. However, more needs to be done.

- Many committee charters do not contain specific statements of purpose.
- The program does not have overall written membership selection guidelines.
- All applicable support costs were not being allocated to the committees.

This report, undertaken at the request of the Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and Power, House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, recommends corrective actions.



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EMD-79-17

FEBRUARY 2, 1979





COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

B-127685

The Honorable John D. Dingell  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy  
and Power  
Committee on Interstate and  
Foreign Commerce  
House of Representatives

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Dear Mr. Chairman:

Your letter of June 22, 1978, requested us to examine the extensive use and cost of the Department of Energy's (DOE's) advisory committees, as well as their purpose and makeup. This letter summarizes our conclusions and recommendations; enclosure I provides more detail concerning the matters discussed herein. Enclosures II and III provide information the Subcommittee requested on the status, cost, staff years, meetings, and number of members of DOE advisory committees. Enclosure IV contains the information requested on prior GAO reports dealing with advisory committees.

DOE has made a major effort to reduce and consolidate its committees with about a one-third reduction since October 1977. It has also sought to review and revise the membership on all its committees. Officials of the General Services Administration, the agency with oversight responsibilities for Executive Branch advisory committees, told us that DOE was one of the more conscientious agencies in its management of advisory committees. However, the results of our review show that certain features of DOE's advisory committee management system still need improvement.

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- Many of DOE's advisory committee charters are not specific in objectives and scope.
- DOE does not have overall written membership selection guidelines to assure that all selection criteria are consistently applied and that committees are of optimum size.
- All applicable support costs were not being allocated to the committees.

A committee's charter is the basic document describing the purpose of the committee. [Twelve of the 20 current DOE charters]

do not contain specific committee objectives and scope, and 18 of these charters do not contain specific timespans for the committee to accomplish its purpose. Specific objectives and scope are necessary to help avoid the potential for overlap and duplication among committees, and to help measure a committee's usefulness. Specific timespans for accomplishment would help increase the accountability of the committee and help avoid the potential of budgeting for a committee's activities longer than is necessary.

DOE has developed some written guidelines on items such as consumer representation and trade association personnel participation; however, several of the DOE selection factors such as geographic distribution and subject matter expertise are unwritten. We believe DOE should formalize all its selection criteria and develop overall written guidelines to help insure that the criteria are consistently applied. Such criteria and overall guidelines are needed to insure that committee membership is balanced and at the optimum level necessary to meet the objectives of the committee.

Furthermore, at the time of our review, DOE had not clearly defined what costs were to be allocated to the committees. As a result, there was no assurance that all costs were being charged to the committees. During a very limited review of cost charges by DOE program offices, we found two cases where costs were charged to the program office which should have been charged to the advisory committee activities. The costs involved about \$67,000. DOE has recently taken steps to provide for better cost allocations.

We are recommending that the Secretary of Energy:

- Insure that each Department of Energy advisory committee charter contain clear and specific statements of purpose and specific timespans for a committee to accomplish its purpose.
- Develop overall written membership selection guidelines to assure that all selection criteria are consistently applied and that committees are of optimum size.
- Develop guidelines for allocating costs to advisory committees and monitor committee activities to insure that all applicable costs are properly allocated.

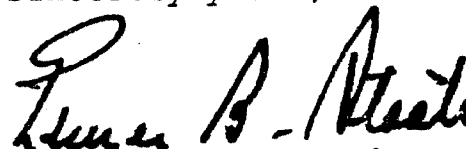
Furthermore, because many of DOE's advisory committee charters are vague and lack specific statements of purpose and timespans, we are reiterating the recommendation in our April 1977 report to the agency with oversight responsibilities for Executive Branch advisory committees. We are recommending that the Administrator, General Services Administration:

--Require that every executive agency advisory committee charter be clear and specific in stating its purpose and objectives and include a specific timespan for accomplishment of its purpose.

We trust that this letter is responsive to your request. As requested we did not obtain formal comments on this report; however, it was discussed with Department of Energy and General Services Administration officials and their comments were incorporated as appropriate. DOE and the General Services Administration basically agreed with our recommendations. However, DOE stated that since it is a legitimate function for advisory committees to provide ongoing assistance in broad, general terms, their charters do not lend themselves to many specifics. We believe, however, that the broad, general language now included in 12 of the 20 charters should be made more specific to clearly define the need for and function of the committees. In addition, the actions which DOE has taken or plans to take regarding its allocation of support cost to the various committees meet the intent of our recommendation. However, we continue to believe that DOE needs to monitor costs, to insure that all costs are fully allocated to the committees.

Your office requested that we make no further distribution of the report prior to committee hearings at which the report will be used. These hearings are tentatively scheduled for February 15, 1979. At that time we will send copies of the report to appropriate Senate and House Committees; the Director, Office of Management and Budget; the Secretary of Energy; the Administrator, General Services Administration; and other interested parties.

Sincerely yours,



Comptroller General  
of the United States

Enclosures - 4



COMMENTS ON CERTAIN ASPECTS  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF  
ENERGY'S ADVISORY COMMITTEES

BACKGROUND

An advisory committee is defined as any committee, board, commission, council, conference, panel, task force, or other similar group, or any subcommittee or subgroup, which is established to provide advice or recommendations to the President or one or more agencies or officers of the Federal Government. This excludes any committee which is composed wholly of full-time officers or employees of the Federal Government. Advisory committees established or used by Executive Branch Federal agencies are governed by the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-463).

Within the Executive Branch, the General Services Administration (GSA) <sup>1/</sup> has the responsibility to carry out certain provisions of this act. These responsibilities include (1) the issuance of overall administrative guidelines and management controls for Federal advisory committees, (2) advice, assistance, and guidance to committees to improve their performance, and (3) a comprehensive annual review of these committees' performance. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB Circular A-63), "Advisory Committee Management," originally issued in March 1974, provides general guidance to the agencies to assist them in implementing the provisions of the act, and includes general procedures and criteria for the establishment, termination, operation, and review of Federal advisory committees.

The Federal Advisory Committee Act requires each Executive Branch Federal agency to establish administrative guidance and management controls, designate a committee management officer to supervise and control the establishment of committees, and assemble data on committees. Within the Department of Energy (DOE), these responsibilities rest with the Advisory Committee Management Office which is a part of the organization of the Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental and Institutional Relations. This Office supervises and controls

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<sup>1/</sup>These responsibilities were transferred by Executive Order to GSA on December 1, 1977. Prior to that time, the Office of Management and Budget had these responsibilities.

the establishment, renewal, and termination of DOE's advisory committees and provides data to GSA for the annual comprehensive review of all Federal advisory committees and the President's annual report to the Congress.

Upon the establishment of DOE on October 1, 1977, 30 advisory committees were transferred to DOE from various other Federal agencies. <sup>1/</sup> As of the end of 1978, DOE had reduced the number of these committees to 20. This reduction was the result of the termination of 9 committees, the transfer of one committee to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) which independently controls its own committees, the elimination of two committees by merger and the formation of two new committees.

Although DOE's FY 1979 budget does not identify the amount of funds requested for advisory committees, DOE stated that the FY 1979 budget includes about \$1.0 million for advisory committees. With two exceptions, these funds are included in the Policy and Management, Program Direction and Management Support section of the DOE budget. The exceptions include (1) Economic Regulatory Administration and FERC committees which are funded from the "Regulation" section of the budget, and (2) the Fossil Energy Advisory Committee, Lignite Subcommittee, which is funded from the "Energy Supply--Research and Technology Development, Coal" section of the DOE budget.

Enclosure II contains information on the 30 committees transferred to DOE, including the data the Subcommittee requested on how often these committees met. Enclosure III contains the data requested on where these committees met and for how long.

The Subcommittee also requested information on whether DOE had decided if the Personnel Security Review Board Panel is an advisory committee. The purpose of this Panel is to review and recommend actions on personnel security cases. For example, an individual whose security clearance is denied has the opportunity to appeal the decision to a Personnel Security Board, composed of DOE employees. If the recommendation is adverse to the individual and he/she desires to have his/her

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<sup>1/</sup>The Department of Energy Organization Act (Public Law 95-91) transferred the functions of the Federal Energy Administration, Energy Research and Development Administration, Federal Power Commission and certain energy-related activities of other agencies to DOE, effective October 1, 1977.



case reviewed, or if the recommendation is favorable and the Assistant Secretary for Defense Programs desires another opinion on the case, the record of the case is then submitted to the Personnel Security Review Board Panel. This Panel, composed mainly of individuals not employed by the Federal Government, serves as an appeal mechanism, providing an independent review of these cases. DOE's General Counsel has determined that this Panel is an advisory committee because it gives consensus advice to DOE for each appeal referred to it.

COMMITTEE CHARTERS  
NEED TO BE MORE SPECIFIC

The Federal Advisory Committee Act requires that each advisory committee's charter contain the scope and responsibilities of the committee and the time period necessary for it to carry out its purpose. These charters are the basic documents describing the purpose of the committees. There are presently 20 committees, of which 3 pertain to coal, 5 to oil and/or gas, and the remainder to various fields such as high energy physics and consumer affairs. We found that although DOE's advisory committee charters contain general information on the committees' activities, responsibilities, and length of existence, 12 of the 20 charters do not contain specifics on these matters. These specifics are needed so that each committee has a clear understanding of its scope and objectives, which in turn helps to prevent the potential for overlap and duplication among the committees.

In our previous report, "Better Evaluations Needed to Weed Out Useless Federal Advisory Committees" (GGD-76-104, April 7, 1977), we recommended that OMB require Federal agency committee charters to be clear and specific in stating their purposes and include specific timespans for committees to accomplish their purposes. Since that time the responsibility for these matters has been transferred to GSA. GSA officials told us that they have emphasized the need for committee charters to be clear and specific in their discussions with Federal agencies. However, despite GSA's informal discussions, DOE is still producing charters which are vague and general, reinforcing our belief that formal guidance is needed. For example, DOE's latest committee charter, the Energy Research Advisory Board's charter, could be much more specific as to committee purpose. Therefore, we reiterate the recommendation contained in our April 7, 1977, report. During a discussion of this letter with GSA officials, they agreed to include a written statement in their revised guidelines that the agencies should prepare more descriptive advisory committee charters.

We found that 12 of the 20 DOE advisory committee charters in existence at the end of 1978 do not clearly define the committees' purposes. Included in the 12 is the Energy Research Advisory Board's charter which was specifically mentioned in the Subcommittee's request. In addition, only one of the 20 committee charters contains a specific time period within which the committee is expected to accomplish its purpose. In fact, 14 of the charters state that the committee will be "continuing," without any real attempt to explain the committee's role in terms of the program's function.

The following excerpts of committee charters in existence at the end of 1978, which have broad and general missions dealing with the gas industry, illustrate the lack of clarity in defining the bounds of each committee's responsibility.

--Natural Gas Advisory Committee: "\* \* \* provides the Secretary of Energy with advice with respect to the development and implementation of policies and programs that affect gas transmission and distribution activities."

--National Petroleum Council: "To advise, inform and make recommendations to the Secretary of the Interior <sup>1/</sup> representing the views of the oil and gas industries with respect to any matter relating to oil and gas or the oil and gas industries." (Underscoring supplied.)

--Liquid Propane (LP) Gas Industry Advisory Committee: "\* \* \* provides the Secretary of Energy with advice and recommendations with respect to the development and implementation of policies and programs that affect the LP-Gas industry."

The same potential for overlapping responsibilities exists with regard to coal committees, especially the Fossil Energy Advisory Committee and the Coal Industry Advisory Committee. The Fossil Energy Advisory Committee was established, pursuant to Subsection (3) of Section 2 of Public Law 86-599, July 7, 1960 (74 Stat. 336) to carry out two basic functions--(1) providing advice in developing through research, new and more efficient methods of mining, preparing, and utilizing coal and (2) assisting in the evaluation of all coal research

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<sup>1/</sup>The National Petroleum Council is presently being reviewed by DOE and the revised charter will reflect that it is now a DOE advisory committee.

programs, proposals, and contracts to avoid duplicative research.

The Coal Industry Advisory Committee provides the Secretary of Energy with advice and recommendations regarding the development and implementation of policies and programs affecting the coal industry. Such matters include the encouragement of expanded production and utilization of coal, while maintaining fair and reasonable consumer prices. Because this committee's charter is so broad, its mission could be interpreted to include advice on coal research which could duplicate the Fossil Energy Advisory Committee's role.

As part of its March 1978 annual evaluation of its advisory committees, DOE considered the possibility of merging these two committees. It decided, however, that it was better to leave them as separate entities because, in its opinion, the Fossil Energy Advisory Committee is more technically-oriented and the Coal Industry Advisory Committee is more policy-oriented. We did not review the actual activities of these two committees or any of the other DOE committees; therefore, we did not determine whether duplication actually exists. We do believe, however, that charters containing specific objectives and scope would help avoid the potential for duplication.

As can be seen from the above five current examples, these broad, general descriptions raise questions not only about potential duplication but also about what the committees use to guide and direct the scope of their activities. We did not compare the other 15 committee charters for duplication because a review of their titles did not indicate as much potential for duplication. A DOE official told us that once a committee's charter has been approved, the committee has an organizational meeting to decide on its specific scope of activities. Although we agree with the benefits of such a meeting, we believe that the decisions on committee activities made as a result of the meeting should be made within some clearly defined and understood limits. Specific objectives and scope are useful to help avoid the potential for overlap and duplication among committees. Specific timespans for accomplishment of objectives would help increase the accountability of the committees and help avoid the potential of budgeting for a committee's activities longer than is necessary.

DOE officials agreed that an advisory committee charter should, first of all, be informative, and to the extent practical, should provide as many specifics as possible about the functions of the committee. However, they believe that a

legitimate function of an advisory committee--to provide ongoing assistance to an agency in broad, general terms--does not lend itself to many specifics. They stated that the Federal Advisory Committee Act adequately guards against the needless continuation of advisory committees by requiring rechartering and justification of committee continuance. We continue to believe, however, that the broad, general language now included in 12 of the 20 charters should be made more specific. By doing so, DOE not only would have a better basis for evaluating committee operations, but also would be making available to the Congress and the public more detailed information on the committees.

Further examination of the committee charters revealed that 8 of the 20 charters very obviously used canned language for the committees' objectives and scope of activities and duties. For example, the LP-Gas Industry and Natural Gas Advisory Committees have basically the same language for their statements of scope of activities and duties. The Gasoline Marketing Advisory Committee, Fuel Oil Marketing Advisory Committee, Food Industry Advisory Committee, and Public Utility Advisory Committee, and, with short additional sentences, the Coal Industry Advisory Committee and the Fossil Energy Advisory Committee, Lignite Subcommittee, use the same basic language with only changes to the name and subject areas.

The committee charter should not be a mere formality, but a tool for agency accountability. It should also be a document that provides the Congress, GSA, and the public with essential and accurate information on committee activities.

DOE should also insure that its charters include an estimated time for each committee to accomplish its purpose. If an advisory committee does not have a finite-term task, then the charter should include enough explanation of the nature of the program and advice it needs so that the justification of continuing status will be evident, rather than merely DOE's assertion.

#### NEED FOR OVERALL CRITERIA ON SELECTION OF MEMBERS

Section 5(b)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act requires "the membership of the advisory committee to be fairly balanced in terms of point of view represented and the functions to be performed by the advisory committee." Although DOE has policy positions on items such as consumer representation and trade association participation, it does not have overall written criteria or rationale for use in determining the optimum size and balance of each advisory committee. We

believe that such criteria are needed to insure not only that each committee has a balanced membership, but also that each committee will have no more members than are necessary to carry out its function.

According to DOE officials, after it is decided that a committee will be formed, membership recommendations are sought from several sources including industry, trade associations and consumer groups, the DOE program office which will oversee the activities of the committee, and other DOE offices such as the Office of Consumer Affairs. In this way DOE seeks to obtain nominations which represent all the various interested parties. From these nominations, the membership panel, which was formed in December 1977 to review the membership of all DOE advisory committees and to make recommendations to the Secretary, selects those persons it believes will give the committee a balanced membership. These persons are then recommended to the Secretary for his approval.

The Chairperson of this panel told us that the panel uses a December 1977 memorandum from the Assistant Secretary for Intergovernmental and Institutional Relations to the Secretary of Energy as guidance in selecting committee members. This memorandum contains policy positions on balanced membership, consumer representation, trade association personnel participation, and a rotation system. The memorandum defines "balance" to mean "\* \* \* that advisory committees should be reasonably representative of the points of view and functions of the industry and users affected, including those of residential, commercial, and industrial consumers, and to include, where appropriate, representation from both State and local government and from State regulatory commissions." The memorandum also states that balance is interpreted to mean that each advisory committee be composed of 10 percent residential consumer representatives where practicable. DOE officials told us that the basis for this 10 percent consumer representation is that they believe this is a minimum percentage to give representatives of consumers a voice in the deliberations of each committee and that a smaller percentage would result in inadequate representation. A DOE official told us that 10 percent was a "rule-of-thumb" used by the Federal Energy Administration and accepted by DOE as reasonable.

The December 1977 memorandum also states that no paid trade association personnel located in the Washington, D.C., area will serve on the committees. As explained to us, DOE reasoning is that these personnel (1) are paid to hold to a position and do not have flexibility in the advice they provide and (2) the associations receive an opportunity to nominate industry representatives for committee membership. The

memorandum also discussed DOE's plans to initiate a rotation system whereby two-thirds of the members of each committee would change every 2 years.

In addition to these policy positions, DOE generally limits a committee member to membership on only one committee. A DOE official told us that presently there are only three members serving on more than one committee. These three members will continue to serve on two committees because DOE wants to maintain continuity and insure coordination between the committees.

The Chairperson of the membership panel told us that in addition to the above written guidelines, the panel uses the following unwritten selection factors.

- Members representing a geographic cross-section of the country.
- Labor representatives, whenever possible.
- Members with expertise on a variety of subject matters.

The Chairperson, however, was unable to provide any minutes or record of discussions illustrating the manner in which the selection panel was applying the written and unwritten criteria.

At first blush the guidelines outlined above appear reasonably adequate and encompass a wide area. However, the guidelines do not contain criteria for determining how much weight ought to be given to expertise in a subject area in comparison with ability to represent a particular group, nor do they provide general guidance for determining the proper number of members on each committee as it relates to the committee's function. We believe that all selection criteria should be stated in writing and that there should be formal overall guidelines directing how the criteria are to be applied.

With regard to committee size, we found that committees range from as few as 6 members to as many as 146. (Enclosure II contains the number of members on each DOE advisory committee.) Because DOE does not have written guidelines for determining the number of members on each committee, we were unable to verify the appropriateness of having more members on some than other committees. Therefore, we did not review the membership of the committees to determine if they were at the optimum level and represented a balanced viewpoint. Although the DOE panel has not completed its review of committee membership,

one of its members told us that the largest DOE committee, the National Petroleum Council, will be reduced from its current level of 146 persons. The exact size of the reduction has not been determined.

DOE officials agreed that every effort should be made to insure the appointment of well-rounded committees of appropriate size. They said they have expended considerable effort to realize these objectives and would welcome any suggestions we might have for improving their performance in this area. We recognize that DOE has expended considerable effort in this area; in fact, GSA officials stated that DOE was one of the more conscientious agencies in its management of advisory committees. Nonetheless, we believe more can and should be done and we provided some examples where additional guidance is needed. We continue to believe that all factors should be in writing and that overall written guidelines are needed so that DOE will have a better basis for insuring that the factors are applied consistently. This will also help insure that each committee has a balanced membership and no more members than are necessary to carry out its function.

#### INCOMPLETE COST DATA

The budget estimates and operating costs for each advisory committee are developed and maintained by the program office responsible for overseeing the activities of the committee. We found, however, that because the program offices were not always allocating all applicable support costs to each advisory committee, the cost data on these advisory committees are incomplete and understate their actual costs.

Although the OMB issued general guidelines on the allocation of costs to advisory committees, DOE has not developed specific guidance detailing how OMB's general guidelines are to be implemented. Rather, each program office decides which of these costs will be allocated. We contacted the DOE representatives for 9 of the 20 advisory committees and asked them how they determined their cost estimates. As a result we learned of two cases where all applicable costs were not charged to committee activities. The first case involved a committee meeting at a DOE laboratory in Wyoming on September 21, 1978. At least 10 DOE employees attended this 1-day meeting; however, only one of these employees' salaries or travel costs were allocated to the committee's activities. The costs incurred by the other employees were charged to other program duties in which the employees were engaged. We estimate that the uncharged costs were about \$7,200.

The second case, which was brought to our attention in the course of our interviews with DOE officials, involved a contract of about \$60,000 for administrative support services. We were told that none of this contract cost was allocated to the advisory committee, even though much of the contract effort directly supported the committee.

DOE officials said that they do not take issue with the importance of properly allocating advisory committee costs. They told us that subsequent to these occurrences, on October 4, 1978, an accounting code tracking system on advisory committee travel expenditures was implemented throughout DOE. With this system, each committee now has a designated accounting code, allowing travel obligations which are charged to the program office to be identified with advisory committee activities. During discussions on this letter, they agreed with our recommendation that DOE allocate all applicable support costs to the committees and told us that in order to avoid future confusion as to cost allocations of advisory committees they would publish, verbatim, the OMB cost guidelines in the Department of Energy Advisory Committee Management Manual. The actions that DOE has taken and plans to take to correct this matter meet the intent of our recommendation. However, we believe DOE also needs to monitor costs to insure that all costs are fully allocated to the committees.

Other matters of interest  
to the Subcommittee

The Subcommittee also asked why some advisory committees had no funding in either FY 1978 or FY 1979 but continue to exist. Two such committees were the Bonneville Regional Advisory Council and the State Regulatory Advisory Committee. DOE did not request FY 1979 funds because it planned to terminate both committees. The former was terminated in May 1978 and the latter was merged with the Electricity Advisory Committee in September 1978 to form the Public Utilities Advisory Committee.

With regard to requested information on the 5 staff years of support to be provided to the Energy Research Advisory Board, DOE officials informed us that these 5 staff years will come from three persons already employed by DOE who will be essentially full-time once the Board is fully operational, and from 2 staff years of support to be contributed by other DOE personnel providing assistance to the Board on specific technical studies.

The proposed level of support to this Board is higher than that provided to other DOE advisory committees. Most DOE



advisory committees have less than 1 staff year of support. In fact, for the 20 advisory committees, the current estimate of staff support is 16 staff years. DOE officials informed us that this Board's higher level of support is due to the fact that "the Board will be tasked with conducting specific studies in response to requests or assignments from the Office of the Secretary or one or more of the Assistant Secretary-level managers in the Department concerned with research. Since the Board will be expected to provide hard technical advice, they need a solid staff back-up." This is a new Board which not only has a vague charter, but also was not fully operational at the time of our review. Therefore, we could not evaluate the need for 5 staff years of support. A charter which specifically states the committee's purpose, activities, and duties could make the need for staff support more evident.

With regard to the information the Subcommittee requested on the three full-time DOE employees, we found the positions to be as follows:

- The Director, Division of Advisory and Liaison Programs, Office of Energy Research, whose annual salary is \$47,500 will be responsible for the overall management and operation of the Board.
- The Executive Director of the Board, whose annual salary is \$40,704, will be responsible for day-to-day operation of the Board.
- A secretary, whose annual salary is \$15,920, will provide administrative support.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Since its inception on October 1, 1977, DOE has taken several steps to improve its advisory committee operations. The total number of committees has been reduced from 30 to 20 and a panel is reviewing committee membership to insure balanced representation and optimum size. In addition, DOE generally limits committee members to membership on only one committee and plans to initiate a rotation system. However, more improvements could and should be made.

Many of the committee charters contain only a general description of purpose and do not specifically tie in the purpose with an established period of performance. These specifics are needed to help avoid the potential for overlap and duplication among the committees.

DOE also needs to develop overall written guidelines and formally state all the criteria it has been using to select advisory committee members, so that all the criteria will be consistently applied. The formalization and use of such procedures would also help to insure that determinations of committee sizes are made on a consistent basis.

We believe that DOE's adoption of accounting codes for advisory committee travel and their plans to include the OMB cost guidelines in their Committee Management Manual will help to address our concerns for proper cost allocation. However, DOE needs to monitor committee costs to insure that all applicable costs are allocated to the appropriate advisory committees.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

We recommend that the Secretary of Energy:

- Insure that each Department of Energy advisory committee charter contain clear and specific statements of purpose and specific timespans for a committee to accomplish its purpose.
- Develop overall written membership selection guidelines to assure that all selection criteria are consistently applied and that committees are of optimum size.
- Develop guidelines for allocating costs to advisory committees and monitor committee activities to insure that all applicable costs are properly allocated.

Because we found that many of the Department of Energy's advisory committee charters are vague and lack specific statements of purpose, we are reiterating the recommendation in our April 1977 report to the agency with oversight responsibilities for Federal advisory committees. We recommend that the Administrator, General Services Administration:

- Require that every executive agency advisory committee charter be clear and specific in stating its purpose and objectives and include a specific timespan for accomplishment of its purpose.

EVOLUTION OF DOE ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Advisory committees transferred to DOE on October 1, 1977	Operating as of Dec. 31, 1978	Calendar year 1978 cost actual in thousand \$	Calendar year 1979 cost est. in thousand \$	No. of staff yrs. in CY 79 est.	No. of full comm. meetings held in CY 78 actual	No. of meetings planned CY 79 est.	No. of members as of 12/31/78
Federal Energy Administration Committees:							
Coal Industry Adv. Com.	Yes	0	\$24	1/2	0	3	25
Construction Adv. Com.	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
Consumer Affairs Adv. Com.	Yes	77	85	1-1/2	3	6	35
Electricity Adv. Com. (note a)	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
Energy Finance Adv. Com.	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
Environmental Adv. Com. (note b)	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
Food Industry Adv. Com.	Yes	60	60	1/2	3	4	34
Fuel Oil Marketing Adv. Com.	Yes	40	40	1/2	3	4-6	25
Gasoline Marketing Adv. Com.	Yes	40	40	1/2	3	4-6	30
LP-Gas Industry Adv. Com.	c/Yes	0	c/0	c/0	0	c/0	c/31
Natural Gas Adv. Com.	c/Yes	12.3	c/0	c/0	0	c/0	c/35
Petroleum and Natural Gas Exploration, Development and Production Adv. Com.	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
State Regulatory Adv. Com. (note a)	No	-	-	-	-	-	-

Advisory committees transferred to DOE on October 1, 1977	Operating as of Dec. 31, 1978	Calendar year 1978 cost actual in thousand \$	Calendar year 1979 cost est. in thousand \$	No. of staff yrs. in CY 79 est.	No. of full comm. meetings held in CY 78 actual	No. of meetings planned CY 79 est.	No. of members as of 12/31/78
Energy Research and Development Administration Committees:							
Advisory Committee on Geothermal Energy Committee of Senior Reviewers	Yes	48	50.5	3/4	3	2	18
Environmental Adv. Com.(note b)	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fossil Energy Adv. Com.	Yes	5	80	3/4	0	4	23
Fossil Energy Adv. Com.	Yes	55	57	2	2	3	24
Lignite Subcommittee	Yes	6	6	1/4	1	1	6
High Energy Physics Adv. Com.	d/Yes	44	47	1/2	5	5	15
Inertial Fusion Adv. Com.	Yes	0	60	1/2	0	4	e/0
Personnel Security Review Board Panel	Yes	20	6	1/4	0	1	6
Procurement Policy Adv. Com.	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
Solar Working Group	No	12	0	-	1	-	-
Study Group on Global Effects of CO2	Yes	35	35	1/4	2	4	f/7
University Programs Advisory Panel	No	-	-	-	-	-	-

Advisory committees transferred to DOE on October 1, 1977	Operating as of Dec. 31, 1978	Calendar year 1978 cost actual in thousand \$	Calendar year 1979 cost est. in thousand \$	No. of staff yrs. in CY 79 est.	No. of full comm. meetings held in CY 78 actual	No. of meetings planned CY 79 est.	No. of members as of 12/31/78
Department of the Interior							
Committees:							
Bonneville Regional Advisory Council	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
Emergency Advisory Committee for Natural Gas	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
National Petroleum Council	Yes	8	20	1/2	1	2	f/146
Department of Commerce:							
National Industrial Energy Council	Yes	0	20	1	0	4	e/0
Federal Power Commission:							
Gas Policy Advisory Council (note g)	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interstate Commerce Commission:							
Pipeline Advisory Committee of Valuation (note h)	No	-	-	-	-	-	-
Newly formed by DOE:							
National Energy Extension Service Adv. Bd. (note i)	Yes	23.5	49	1/2	1	3	20
Energy Research Adv. Bd. (note k)	Yes	78.9	353	5	1	1/4	22
Public Utility Adv. Comm. (note a)	Yes	0	40	1/4	0	3-5	e/0
Total		<u>\$564.7</u>	<u>\$1,072.5</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>61-67</u>	<u>e/502</u>

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ENCLOSURE II

ENCLOSURE II

NOTES

- a/Merger between Electricity and State Regulatory effective 9/13/78, created Public Utility Advisory Committee.
- b/Merged into one committee.
- c/Termination under study.
- d/May be terminated when Energy Research Advisory Board in operation.
- e/Membership is not yet settled. Inertial Fusion, Public Utility and National Industrial Energy Council are expected to have about 9, 23, and 21 members respectively. Total membership will approach 550 members, less reductions noted in b/ and f/.
- f/Membership restructuring pending; National Petroleum Council is expected to be reduced in size.
- g/Transferred to control of Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on June 30, 1978, terminated on November 11, 1978.
- h/This committee was scheduled to be absorbed by DOE, but a charter was not filed as required and the committee was terminated. Subsequently chartered by Federal Energy Regulatory Commission on 10/16/78.
- i/Created by National Energy Extension Act (Public Law 95-39, Title V); the committee was chartered on May 31, 1978.
- j/In addition, 15-20 meetings by standing subcommittees are anticipated.
- k/Created by DOE on June 19, 1978.

CY 1978

LOCATION AND LENGTH OF DEPARTMENT OF ENERGYADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

<u>Advisory Committee</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Meetings</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Length of each in days</u>
Consumer Affairs	Washington, D.C.	1	2
	Washington, D.C.	2	1
Subcommittee	Washington, D.C.	8	1
Energy Research Advisory Board	Washington, D.C.	1	2
Food Industry	Atlanta, GA	1	1
	Washington, D.C.	2	1
Subcommittee	Washington, D.C.	7	1
Fossil Energy	Arlington, VA	1	1
	Laramie, WY	1	1
Subcommittee	Washington, D.C.	1	1
Lignite Subcommittee of Fossil Energy	Grand Forks, ND	1	1
Fuel Oil Marketing	New Orleans, LA	1	1
	San Francisco, CA	1	1
	Washington, D.C.	1	2
Ad Hoc Subcommittee	San Francisco, CA	1	1
	Washington, D.C.	1	1
Middle Distillate Subcommittee	Chicago, IL	1	2
	New Orleans, LA	1	1
	Washington, D.C.	1	1
Gasoline Marketing	Los Angeles, CA	1	1
	Washington, D.C.	2	1
Ad Hoc Subcommittee	Los Angeles, CA	1	1

<u>Advisory Committee</u>	<u>Meetings</u>		<u>Length of each in days</u>
	<u>Location</u>	<u>Number</u>	
Geothermal	Los Angeles, CA	1	2
	Los Angeles, CA	1	1
	Washington, D.C.	1	1
Subcommittee	Los Angeles, CA	5	1
	Washington, D.C.	4	1
High Energy Physics	Germantown, MD	1	2
	Stanford, CA	1	1
	Stanford, CA	1	3
	Washington, D.C.	1	2
	Batavia, IL	1	2
National Energy Extension Service	Washington, D.C.	1	2
Subcommittee	Golden, CO	1	2
National Petroleum Council	Washington, D.C.	1	1
Subcommittee	Dallas, TX	1	1
	Houston, TX	1	1
	Washington, D.C.	3	1
Natural Gas			
Ad Hoc Subcommittee	Washington, D.C.	6	1
Solar Working Group	Washington, D.C.	1	2
Study Group on Global Effects of Carbon Dioxide	Atlanta, GA	1	1
	Washington, D.C.	1	1



STATUS OF PAST GAO RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING  
ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Report Title, Date	Addressee	Recommendations	Present Status
<p>Better Evaluations Needed to Weed Out Useless Federal Advisory Committees (April 7, 1977) (GGD-76-104)</p>	<p>Congress</p>	<p>We recommended that the Director Office of Management and Budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>--Develop stringent, uniform guidelines on both subgroups and ad hoc groups, emphasizing that such groups should not be used to circumvent the act, unwittingly or otherwise.</li> <li>--Require that agency committee charters (1) be clear and specific in stating their purposes and objectives and (2) include a specific time-span for a committee to accomplish its purpose.</li> <li>--Issue more detailed guidelines to insure that cost estimates are consistent</li> </ul>	<p>"Subgroups" and "ad hoc groups" will be more clearly defined in GSA's revised Committee Management Guidelines due to be updated.</p> <p>GSA orally encourages agencies to prepare clear and specific statements of purpose and time-span. However, as the result of our discussions, GSA plans to include a written statement in its revised guidelines that charters be more descriptive.</p> <p>The OMB issued revised cost guidelines in December 1976 which met the major intent</p>

Report Title, Date	Addressee	Recommendations	Present Status
		<p>Government-wide. Require the agencies to submit committee administrative overhead costs-- in lump sum figures--with the agencies' annual report submissions.</p> <p>--Work with the agencies in developing a standard definition of "report" to be used and enforced by all Federal agencies. Also, jointly develop a monitoring and evaluation system to follow-up on committee reports and recommendations.</p>	<p>of our recommendations. However, GSA does not require agencies to submit committee management office overhead costs in the agencies' annual report submissions.</p> <p>GSA plans to develop a standard definition for "report" which agencies can use for advisory committee purposes. GSA believes the cost of a monitoring and evaluation system would outweigh the benefits. They believe this is more a role for each individual agency.</p>
<p>Letter Report on Federal Energy Administration's Management of its Advisory Committees (August 2, 1976) (EMD-76-5)</p>	<p>Administrator, Federal Energy Administration</p>	<p>We recommended that the Administrator, Federal Energy Administration: (FEA)</p> <p>--when appropriate, refer all important energy issues confronting the agency to the respective</p>	<p>The DOE agreed with all the recommendations. An executive summary is now</p>

Report Title, Date	Addressee	Recommendations	Present Status
		<p>advisory committees before making an agency decision on the respective issue;</p> <p>--clearly indicate to the respective advisory committee the items for which FEA seeks advice and outline the type of committee action (report, recommendations, only discussion, etc.) which would most assist FEA;</p> <p>--on a timely basis, inform advisory committees of FEA actions planned in response to the committees' recommendations; and</p> <p>--complete uniform administrative guidelines and management controls for its</p>	<p>prepared after each committee meeting which highlights all the committee actions and required DOE action. The summaries also inform committee members of DOE's management action relative to their comments and/or recommendations.</p> <p>The DOE's administrative guidelines were due to be issued in January 1979.</p>

Report Title, Date	Addressee	Recommendations	Present Status
<p>Report to The Honorable John D. Dingell, Chairman Sub-Committee on Energy and Power, Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce, House of Representatives (May 25, 1977) (B-176782)</p>	<p>Honorable John D. Dingell</p>	<p>advisory committees.</p> <p>This report contained no recommendations. It addressed a number of issues concerning the proposed closing to the public of an Energy Research and Development Administration Advisory Committee meeting. The report also discussed the advantages and disadvantages of giving "special government employee" status to advisory committee members.</p>	<p>Not applicable</p>

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