# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy, Department of energy

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Energy and Natural Resources |
| Agency Mission | To ensure America’s security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental and nuclear challenges through transformative science and technology solutions |
| Position Overview | The assistant secretary for fossil energy manages three major program areas in the department: the Fossil Energy Research, Development and Demonstration; the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and the Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve; and the Naval Petroleum Reserves.  |
| Compensation | Level IV $155,500 (5 U.S.C. § 5315)[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Position Reports to | Undersecretary for Science and Energy[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | Fossil Energy Research and Development had a fiscal 2016 enacted budget of $632 million, though its 2018 budget request was $280 million. It had 638 full-time equivalents in 2016.[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Leads the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy in its mission to enhance U.S. economic and energy security by: managing and performing energy-related research that maximizes the efficient and environmentally sound production and use of fossil fuels; supporting the development of policy options that benefit the U.S. public by ensuring access to adequate supplies of affordable and clean energy; partnering with industry and others to advance clean and efficient fossil energy technologies toward commercialization in the U.S. and international markets; maintaining strategic crude and heating oil supplies to protect the U.S. against sudden and major supply interruptions and shortages; and maximizing the value of certain government-owned oil and gas fields
* Manages three major program areas in the department: the Fossil Energy Research, Development and Demonstration; the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and the Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve; and the Naval Petroleum Reserves
* Develops strategy for assigned programs to achieve goals and objectives established by either Congress or the secretary, or directed by national energy policy, as well as environmental protection, worker and public health safety, and safeguards and security
* Develops a balanced program to research, develop and demonstrate the technologies needed for the efficient and environmentally sound production and use of fossil fuels consistent with the National Energy Plan
* Manages and assures the readiness of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve’s emergency supply of crude oil as mandated by the Energy Policy and Conservation Act of 1975, as amended, to reduce the nation’s vulnerability to severe petroleum supply disruptions[[4]](#endnote-4)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Background in energy
* Previous government experience (a plus)
* Familiarity with legislative and federal budgeting process
* Strong management experience
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| Competencies | * Strong communication and interpersonal skills
* Ability to manage energy research
* Ability to work in a matrixed environment
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Christopher Smith (2014): Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy, Department of Energy; Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oil and Natural Gas, Department of Energy; various managerial and analytical positions with international oil companies[[5]](#endnote-5) |
| Charles DeWitt McConnell (2012 to 2013): Vice President, Carbon Management, Battelle Energy Technology; Business Manager, Praxair Inc.[[6]](#endnote-6) |
| James J. Markowsky (2009 to 2010): President of Research and Development Solutions, LLC; Director, Appalachian Power Company; Executive Vice President, Ohio Power Company[[7]](#endnote-7) |

1. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. https://energy.gov/leadership/organization-chart [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. https://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2017/05/f34/FY2018BudgetVolume3\_0.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. OPM [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. https://energy.gov/fe/contributors/christopher-smith [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. http://news.rice.edu/2013/09/03/rice-taps-mcconnell-to-direct-energy-and-environment-initiative-3/ [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. http://www.bloomberg.com/research/stocks/private/person.asp?personId=7655546&privcapId=407290 [↑](#endnote-ref-7)