

# Eliminate the Biological and Environmental Research (BER) Program

SAVINGS IN MILLIONS OF DOLLARS

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2016–2020	2016–2025
\$619	\$621	\$623	\$630	\$645	\$659	\$673	\$691	\$705	\$718	\$3,138	\$6,584

## Heritage Recommendation:

Eliminate the Biological and Environmental Research (BER) program. This proposal saves \$619 million in 2016, and \$6.6 billion over 10 years.

## Rationale:

The BER program funds research for a variety of energy-related subjects including biology, radiochemistry, climate science, and subsurface biogeochemistry. At a basic research and development level, the funding for some of the research endeavors is valid, but climate change should not be one of them, because it is not part of the DOE's mission. Furthermore, the BER program also supports such activities as how plants and microbes “can be manipulated to harness their processes and products that contribute to new strategies for producing new biofuels, cleaning up legacy waste, and sequestering carbon dioxide.”<sup>36</sup>

The entrepreneur who can make a biofuel product that is cost-competitive with oil does not need government funding. The need to capture and sequester CO<sub>2</sub> is questionable because the policy goal of reducing carbon dioxide itself is questionable. Even so, carbon capture and sequestration is a technological hurdle that the private sector should overcome without the government's help. Many BER programs should be cut drastically or entirely because they are private-sector activities, duplicative of other research, or do not align with the DOE's mission. Cuts should be made to the:

- The Climate and Environmental Science program
- Biological Systems Facilities and Infrastructure program
- Bioenergy Research Centers program
- The Foundational Genomics Research program
- The Genomics Analysis and Validation program
- The Metabolic Synthesis and Conversion program
- The Computational Biosciences program

## Additional Reading:

- Nicolas Loris, “Department of Energy Budget Cuts: Time to End the Hidden Green Stimulus,” Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2668, March 23, 2012, <http://www.Heritage.org/research/reports/2012/03/departments-of-energy-budget-cuts-time-to-end-the-hidden-green-stimulus>.

## Calculations:

Savings are expressed as budget authority and were calculated by using the FY 2014 enacted spending levels as found on page 164 of House of Representatives, 113th Congress, 2nd Session, “Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill, 2015,” <http://appropriations.house.gov/uploadedfiles/hrpt-113-hr-fy2015-energywater.pdf>. The FY 2014 enacted spending was increased at the same rate as discretionary spending for 2016–2025, according to CBO's most recent August 2014 baseline spending projections.