

the strategic petroleum reserve, energy conservation, and the more efficient use of energy resources. Since the agency was to expire after two years, Congress passed legislation on August 14, 1976, further extending the life of the Federal Energy Administration until December 31, 1977.³⁴

FORD AND THE ENERGY REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1974

Federal energy policy, programs, and reorganization languished through the Watergate crisis until August 1974, when Vice President Gerald R. Ford succeeded Nixon as President. Although Nixon declared that the “energy crisis in America [had] passed” following the lifting of the Arab oil embargo in March, Ford in his initial address to a joint session of Congress asserted that the Nation “must not let [the] energy crisis happen again” and promised to push forward with “Project Independence.” In his first press conference, the new President stressed the “need and necessity...to accelerate every aspect of Project Independence.”

Ford moved swiftly to reestablish White House direction over federal energy activities. On October 8 he announced the creation of a national energy board charged with “developing a single national energy policy and program.” Three days later, Ford signed the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974. The act established the Energy Research and Development Administration and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which was given the licensing and regulatory functions of the abolished Atomic Energy Commission. The legislation also formalized Ford’s national energy board as the Energy Resources Council and provided for the council’s termination upon creation of a department for energy or natural resources. Ford chose Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton to serve as chairman of the Energy Resources Council, which also included the heads of the Federal Energy Administration and the Energy Research and Development Administration. Frank G. Zarb of the Office of Management and Budget

was named the Council’s executive director. On December 18, Zarb also became the third Federal Energy administrator when Sawhill, who had replaced Simon, resigned.³⁵

ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION

President Ford appointed Robert C. Seamans, Jr., president of the National Academy of Engineering and former Secretary of the Air Force, to lead the Energy Research and Development Administration, which was created to achieve two goals:

- To focus the Federal Government’s energy research and development activities within a unified agency whose major function would be to promote the speedy development of various energy technologies; and
- To separate nuclear licensing and regulatory functions from the development and production of nuclear power and weapons.

The Energy Research and Development Administration inherited by far the largest portion of its budget and personnel from the Atomic Energy Commission, including the Commission’s network of field offices and national laboratories. The Energy Research and Development Administration also incorporated all energy research and development functions from the Department of the Interior’s Office of Coal Research and all Bureau of Mines energy research centers. The National Science Foundation relinquished its offices involved in solar and geothermal energy development, and the Environmental Protection Agency transferred its functions relating to research, development, and demonstration of innovative automotive systems.³⁶

The Energy Research and Development Administration was activated on January 19, 1975. Seamans appointed Robert A. Fri as deputy administrator and divided the new agency into traditional fuel- and resource-oriented units of fossil energy, nuclear energy, solar, geothermal, and advanced energy systems. Units were also established for environment and safety, conservation, and