

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ESTABLISHED

Legislation creating the Department of Energy passed the Senate on May 18 and the House on June 3, 1977. Congressional action, including approval of the conference report, was completed by August 3. President Carter signed the bill into law (Public Law 95-91) on August 4, 1977. The next day Carter named Schlesinger as the first Secretary of Energy. The Department was officially activated on October 1, 1977.⁴⁷

Schlesinger's initial task was to meld all headquarters, field, and staff programs from the component agencies, including their various supporting offices and functions, into a unified Department of Energy with about 20,000 employees and an annual budget of \$10.4 billion. The Department's first Secretary contended that, historically, the problem with new departments had been that they pulled together existing agencies under the same roof without integrating the activities of those agencies. The legislation creating the Department of Energy, Schlesinger believed, was broad enough to allow him to achieve the desired effective integration.⁴⁸

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

The new Department of Energy did not simply organize existing agencies and offices under new leadership but reshaped many programs and functions to fit the national energy policy of the Carter Administration. By law, the Department would be led by three principal officers—the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Under Secretary. Energy technologies would not be divided by fuel type, such as fossil, nuclear, or solar, but grouped under assistant secretaries according to their evolution from research and development through application and commercialization. This approach reflected the administration's decision to formulate a comprehensive energy policy rather than to engage simply in fuel management. Thus basic research was placed in the Office of Energy Research. Individual research and development projects in solar, geothermal, fossil, and nuclear energy were placed under the assistant secretary for energy technology. After scientific and technical feasibility was determined, projects would be transferred to the assistant secretary for resource applications or to the assistant secretary for conservation



President Carter inspects new Department of Energy seal with Secretary of Energy James Schlesinger (1977-1979).

Source: U.S. Department of Energy