U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

PNNL Grid Storage Launchpad Dedication

August 13, 2024

Sen. Cantwell Opening Remarks

[AUDIO] [VIDEO]

Sen. Cantwell: Well good morning. Thank you, Dr. Ashby, for that introduction, and most importantly, for your vision, and your continued support for getting the launchpad, not just out on a blackboard, but now in reality.

I want to thank all of the people that are here, from DOE, but specifically I want to thank Dr. Richmond, Gene Rodrigues, and Dr. Kung for their great work in understanding that DOE, yeah, should bet on the Tri-Cities, because if you bet on the Tri-Cities, they'll deliver when it comes to electricity and storage.

I want to thank all the local legislators that are here. I think Theresa Richardson got a shout out as our mayor, but Matt Boehnke, thank you for understanding what needed to happen in Olympia. Stephanie Barnard, April Connors, Mary Dye, Perry Dozier, and Mark Klicker, thank you guys for all understanding that this is a partnership between the state and federal government.

But I also want to thank everybody at the lab for competing, and winning this competition, and now delivering. That is, because we know wind and solar may be the cheapest forms of electricity, it's not always windy and sunny - although today the wind is doing a really good job.

Grid storage needs to be there to fill the gap, and grid energy storage can change renewables, and the generation and discharge during this very high demand. We know one thing about our state, it's continuing to grow, so grid storage allows more wind and solar to be integrated into the grid, and the Northwest's reliability to provide that clean source of energy will be, as it has been in the past, one of the big drivers of the Washington economy.

In part, we have been able to lead in aviation, manufacturing, information technology, agriculture, and now data centers, all because we know how to provide cheap, affordable electricity, and we want to keep doing it.

Statewide, Washington employs almost 80,000 people working in clean energy and grid storage. In Moses Lake, Group14 and Sila are building large manufacturing plants that will provide hundreds of good paying jobs. But guess what they're counting on. They're counting on cheap, reliable, clean energy that grid storage will help provide.

If we want to make the next generation of batteries, we need the energy storage advancements that are here, with the brightest minds at PNNL to show that this is the same project, just really working together. And discovering new and more efficient materials that are faster, cheaper, by going from computing, modeling, to prototyping, to testing and under realistic grid conditions. That's literally what we're doing here, realistic grid conditions.

By partnering with industry to speed this innovation, the transfer of government funds, of R&D into practical applications, this facility will help ensure the advancements in energy storage that really do

translate to the private sector, creating new innovative battery products as well as dependable manufacturing jobs.

So we're very happy that $75 million was invested federally into this project. We are so happy that this technology will be a leader in helping the United States with our future milestones. And as somebody that was very involved with chips manufacturing and the CHIPS bill, I can tell you, that motto above us here: validate, accelerate, collaborate, and educate, that's exactly what's happening here, and it is also a model for all the technology transfer that we need to continue to do to make sure that our nation is competitive in manufacturing.

So thank you again, PNNL and DOE for helping us help lead the nation in solving a very big challenge. Thank you.