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By Edward Felker **Energy Guardian**

Energy Secretary Steven Chu says his department's efforts to craft a clean electricity standard won't rush toward any one energy source. The department's early modeling "gives us a sense at first pass that no single sector will dominate. A clean energy standard will not automatically say everything goes to natural gas, everything goes to nuclear (or) everything goes to renewables," Chu told reporters on Wednesday. "At least in the first pass it seems to be what we wanted, a balance, that also depends on the area," he added.

During a hearing at the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Chu said that the goal of 80 percent clean electricity by 2035 would see increases in the energy generated from natural gas, renewable and nuclear power, along with continued use of coal combined with carbon capture. "We think we see growth in all these areas," Chu told reporters.

Chairman Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., has requested estimates from the department showing potential domestic energy breakdowns under the proposal. He said he has yet to begin drafting any legislative language. The proposal would effectively seek to double the current share of low-carbon electricity, which includes renewables, nuclear, hydropower and natural gas, though Chu said the department only gives it about half the credit of zero-carbon sources. Chu stressed that the administration's request to boost nuclear construction loan guarantees by \$36 billion, to \$54.5 billion, is critical to the clean energy standard, by making new nuclear plants a viable investment. "Right now there is an uncertainty, can you build them on time and on budget," he said.