

Opening Statement
Chris Fall
Nominee to be Director of the Office of Science at the Department of Energy
Nomination Hearing
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
June 26, 2017

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you as the nominee to be the Director of the Office of Science at the Department of Energy. I would also like to thank the President and Secretary Perry for their trust and confidence in nominating me. I am deeply honored to be considered for this position assisting the Secretary in the leadership of what I believe to be the world's pre-eminent science enterprise.

Please allow me to introduce to you my family from across the river in Arlington. My wife, Dr. Sandra Wilkniss, may be familiar to some of you from her time as staff for Senator Heinrich and Senator Bingaman before that. She is joined by our daughter Alex and our son Leo. I believe that some of my current and former colleagues are here and I appreciate their support.

Sandra and I came to Washington just about eight years ago from Academia to do one year science policy fellowships, and I had the great fortune to land at the Office of Naval Research to work on innovation strategies. The Navy cleverly convinced me to stay longer with a remarkable trip to an aircraft carrier at sea, and I moved on to run the international liaison office, to be the deputy director of research for STEM and Workforce programs, and most recently to briefly manage the Navy's basic research portfolio and to be the acting Chief Scientist. The Office of Naval Research was the first Federal science funding agency, and it dates from the seminal policy decisions in 1946 to fund research at universities in order to assure our national security and to grow our national prosperity. The Office of Science continues in that tradition.

I was privileged to spend three of those years across two administrations overseeing defense programs at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy. For about half of that time I lead the National Security and International Affairs Division in the absence of a confirmed appointee. In addition to defense issues, my team coordinated science and technology policy for the intelligence community, homeland security, biosecurity, nuclear security, as well as international science and technology cooperation. All of this was in close collaboration with the departments and agencies doing science and technology and the various other policy councils of the Executive Office of the President. From this experience I believe that I have a deep appreciation for the larger context in which the Office of Science sits.

I am currently running ARPA-E pending a nominee. Secretary Perry is fond of saying that the greatest job he's held was Governor of Texas but the coolest job is Secretary of Energy. ARPA-E is kind of like the special forces for science and technology in the Department of Energy, and it is a really exciting place to be as a scientist and engineer. ARPA-E might be the coolest job I

ever have, but I want to assure you that I understand and appreciate the profound importance of the tradition, mission, and work of the Office of Science, our national laboratories, and the many university and private sector scientists and engineers who contribute to our Nation's leadership in science.

I've had the chance to visit most of the Office of Science and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) laboratories, and I've visited Idaho National Lab under the Office of Nuclear Energy. Two weeks ago, the Colorado Energy Research Collaboratory hosted me for a fantastic visit to NREL, the three affiliated universities, and the oil and gas fields in Weld County. I was also grateful for the opportunity to join my DOE colleagues at the Chairman's recent energy summit in Fairbanks. I spent four of the best summers of my life working in southeast Alaska with the U.S. Forest Service when I was much younger, but I did not fully appreciate the opportunities that remote and harsh environments present for developing, testing, and commercializing advanced energy technologies. It is always a thrill to visit our incredible national laboratories, and I believe that it is also important to get out of Washington to connect with the energy problems, opportunities, and solutions that exist outside of the government.

If I am confirmed as Director, my priorities will be those that the Secretary and the Undersecretary for Science have previously charted for you. Exascale computing, engineering biology, and artificial intelligence are all key new science priorities, the Department has a great deal of capability relevant to the microelectronics industry, and the nascent area of quantum information sciences presents a special opportunity for U.S. leadership. The best basic science is done collaboratively with the smartest minds from around the world, but I expect that the Secretary will also ask me to assure that we are protecting our commercial and national security intellectual property appropriately.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you. If confirmed, I promise my fullest effort and attention, and I will work collaboratively and transparently with you and your staffs. I look forward to any questions you might have for me.