

**Testimony of Catherine Jereza
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of Electricity
at the U.S. Department of Energy
Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
May 8, 2025**

Thank you, Chairman Lee, Ranking Member Heinrich, and distinguished members of the committee.

It is a true honor to be here, and I want to thank President Trump and Energy Secretary Wright for the trust they have placed in me with this nomination to serve as the Assistant Secretary of Electricity at the U.S. Department of Energy. If I have the honor of being confirmed, I look forward to working with all the members of this committee.

I would like to take a moment to recognize those who are very dear to me, especially those who have traveled to be here and continue to support me during one of the most important opportunities of my life. My husband Ken and stepdaughter Chloe from Maryland, my sister Betty and her daughter Ella from Virginia, my sister Tina and her son Brandon from West Virginia, and many extended friends and colleagues. My parents wish they could be here in person, but since my mom is recovering from surgery, they are watching from their home in Beckley, West Virginia. I also want to thank my very large and extended family who are watching from all over the country.

More importantly, I want to thank my parents and the leaders who have come before me. My dad instilled the importance of academics, religion, music, and sports – also known as ARMS – which has armed me for how to live my life. My mother is a lot like President Trump – a fighter. When times get tough their never-give-up attitude inspires me to keep going. I will never forget growing up under their guidance in a place called almost heaven West Virginia. As a baby, my dad moved our family to Beckley to work as an internal medicine doctor for the United Mine Workers of America.

Unbeknownst to me, my passion for math and science would eventually lead me to get back to my roots to unleash baseload power, including fossil fuels, advanced nuclear, geothermal, and hydropower, that is so vital to the affordability, reliability, and security of our nation's electricity system.

My whole life, I have honed my skills in multi-stakeholder collaboration. Imagine growing up with seven siblings and trying to get to an agreement on anything. Negotiating and persuading such strong and divergent personalities to line up and move forward is never easy. Now imagine doing this in today's political environment. I believe collaboration is one of my most important leadership skills that I can bring to the U.S. Department of Energy and the many stakeholders that make our North American electricity system work.

Engineers help make things work. That is why I chose to become an engineer – an engineer who likes to pick the most difficult things to figure out. I picked the French Horn because it is the most difficult instrument to play. I picked chemical engineering because it is the most difficult

undergraduate degree to earn. And now, if confirmed, I will tackle one of the most challenging problems our nation has ever faced – helping add the baseload power America needs to meet its energy demands today and in the future. President Trump and Energy Secretary Wright have made their agenda clear, and if confirmed, I will work every day to advance U.S. leadership in innovation, reduce costs for American families, and strengthen grid reliability and security.

I have a mindset for innovation. Starting with my first job out of college, I implemented programs that increased production and product quality. For twenty years I have worked with National Laboratories and other premier research institutions to drive innovation from concept to commercialization and foster ingenuity to optimize technology throughout its lifecycle. I am a systems thinker who understands the promise and trade-offs of all energy technologies under real-world conditions. If confirmed, I will strive to bring common sense cost-effective solutions that benefit all Americans.

In President Trump's first term, I had the opportunity to work in the Office of Electricity as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transmission Permitting and State Technical Assistance. In that role, I developed and still have extensive relationships and understanding of the complex and often divergent perspectives at the international, regional, and local levels. The North American Power Grid is the biggest machine in the world and has the biggest bureaucracy in the world to make it work. If confirmed, I will work relentlessly to deliver on President Trump's promise to cut red tape and expedite the development of reliable energy infrastructure.

I enjoyed meeting with many members of the committee, and I appreciate the perspective, priorities and insight that you have shared. If confirmed, I will need your continued partnership to strengthen our grid. I look forward to answering your questions and, if confirmed, implementing the President's and Secretary's bold energy agenda to unleash energy security and prosperity.

Chairman Lee, Ranking Member Heinrich, thank you for the opportunity to appear before the committee today, and I look forward to your questions.