

Statement of
Jennifer M. Granholm
Nominee for the Position of Secretary
of the United States Department of Energy
Before the
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate

January 27, 2021

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Manchin, and distinguished members of the Committee.

Thank you for holding this hearing so expeditiously.

I'd like to begin by thanking Senator Stabenow and Congressman Upton for their gracious words. Senator Stabenow has been a role model for me as we navigated the struggles of the recession; Michigan is indeed fortunate to have such an incredibly hard working and indefatigable senior senator.

And congressman Upton, thank you for your words of bipartisanship. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with you over the years, and here too the people of West Michigan are lucky to have a man of Fred Upton's integrity and intelligence looking out for them.

I want to introduce my husband, whom I also thank from the bottom of my heart, for his love and support as I pursue public service again.

A little about me — I was brought to this country from Canada at four years old by parents seeking economic opportunity. As I mentioned when I was nominated, my parents both had only high school degrees. My dad was born into dire poverty, in a cabin with no running water in a rural part of Canada. My dad's father shot and killed himself out of desperation during the Great Depression because he could not find work to support my grandmother and their three children. My dad was three years old. I bring to this role the sincere belief that we, in America, cannot leave our people behind.

I'd like to share a bit about the focus I will bring to the Department of Energy if I am confirmed.

I will focus on three missions: first, the security of America through the National Nuclear Security Administration and clean-up of our Cold War legacy, ensuring that we can protect our nation. Second, supporting the amazing scientific work being done at the DOE's 17 National Labs and other facilities across the country, including on climate change and emissions reductions. And third, taking that research to scale, deploying it to create jobs for Americans.

It's that last point that I want to pause on for a moment. I believe that I was nominated by the President because I am obsessed with creating good paying jobs in America. Having been the governor of Michigan when the automotive industry was on its knees, I understand what it's like to look in the eyes of men and women who have lost jobs through no fault of their own.

Michigan is a place where workers could have a house and two cars and a enough left over to take their family on a vacation to a cottage on a lake up north — all because they had a good job in a factory.

Then the bottom dropped out. The recession and the auto bankruptcies hit. At that time our unemployment rate was the highest in the nation. In Detroit it was 25%.

Because we had been such an auto-dependent state, I knew we had to diversify, both inside and outside the auto industry. When I say "inside" the auto industry, I mean we had to make car 2.0: the electric vehicle, including the guts to that vehicle, the battery. And diversifying outside the auto industry, we had to create jobs in new sectors. The most promising of those sectors was in clean energy. So we went to work. And today, one third of all North American electric vehicle battery production is in Michigan. Michigan is one of the top five states for clean energy patents, and 126,000 Michiganders were working in the clean energy sector before COVID-19.

This is a sector that every state can benefit from: The products that reduce carbon emissions will create a 23 trillion dollar global market by 2030. That's a massive opportunity! We can buy electric car batteries from Asia or we can make them in America. We can install wind turbines from Denmark or we can make them in America. We can allow other countries to corner the market on carbon reduction technologies like Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage, or we can put our workers in good paying jobs manufacturing and installing those solutions in America.

In talking with you — Democrats and Republicans — I know that you all share that belief, and if confirmed, I look forward to working with you to bring good paying jobs to every state, and to make sure that no worker gets left behind.

I'm happy to take your questions.