



**Opening Statement
DOI Nominations Hearing for Greenblatt and Jorjani
Chairman Lisa Murkowski
May 2, 2019**

Good morning, everyone. The Committee will come to order.

We're here today to consider the nominations for two individuals for the Department of the Interior. Before we do the introduction on that, I'd like to turn to my colleague, Ranking Member Manchin for a few words this morning.

****Senator Manchin recognized David Brooks for his 30 years of service at the Committee****

Let's talk about our two nominees that we have before us this morning: Mark Lee Greenblatt who is nominated to be Inspector General and Mr. Daniel Jorjani nominated to be Solicitor.

These are critical positions and I want to thank both nominees for their willingness to serve.

The Interior Department has numerous, wide-ranging responsibilities, including the administration of more than a quarter of the land in the United States. Almost two-thirds of the land in Alaska is under the oversight of the Department of the Interior, it is also the primary federal agency charged with meeting our nation's trust responsibilities to American Indian and Alaska Native people.

In order to carry out its mission, the Department needs a strong, independent watchdog who can ensure that it operates efficiently, effectively, and legally. It also needs a top lawyer who can provide good advice, counsel, and legal representation.

Both of these positions have been vacant since President Trump took office. In fact, the Interior Department has been without a permanent inspector general for more than 10 years – we've got to change that.

The Inspector General must appreciate the responsibilities the IG's office has to the Department's Secretary, as well as to Congress. That's why I welcome the nomination of Mr. Greenblatt, who is well-qualified for this position. He has more than 15 years of oversight experience, including several positions in the Office of the Inspector General at the Department of Commerce and as a Staff Director and Chief Counsel on the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations.

The Department's Solicitor must have a commitment to the careful interpretation of both the law and precedent, regardless of how that advice may be received. Mr. Jorjani has been performing the Solicitor's duties largely since President Trump took office, but his experience at Interior extends beyond that. This is actually his second tour at the Department, having previously served in the Bush Administration. Mr. Jorjani clearly knows the issues, and is demonstrating he can do the job.

For members who have questions for our nominees, I'm going to be here this morning until we can get through everybody. If members have additional questions after the hearing, questions for the record will be due at the close of business tomorrow. As usual, it is my intent to report these nominees as soon as possible.

I would just note that we still have five nominees who have already been favorably reported from our committee, who are still awaiting confirmation by the Senate. That includes Susan Combs, the President's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Policy, Management, and Budget [at Interior]. She's been reported from our committee three separate times, she's now been awaiting confirmation for a total of 661 days.

So we need to get moving on these nominations. Secretary Bernhardt and Secretary Perry need their teams in place. So I encourage members to recognize the importance of confirming these individuals, and the importance of encouraging Americans to want to enter public service, and to work with me to secure their approval.

At this point I'll turn to Senator Manchin for his comments. And then we will swear in our witnesses and proceed.

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