

**Statement of
David Crane**

**Nominee for Undersecretary of Energy for Infrastructure
United States Department of Energy**

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United States Senate**

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Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Having had the benefit of a long career, I can tell you that my path was set by the twin oil crises of the 1970s. I believed then, as I believe now, that the United States is the greatest, most judiciously powerful nation on earth, and it troubled me deeply that our country might be compromised through our dependence on foreign sources of a single commodity. I subsequently wrote my college thesis on our potential vulnerability of foreign dependence on sources of other strategic minerals, like magnesium or cobalt. It is a concern and fascination with essential commodities that remains relevant to this day.

While I have worked as a lawyer, a developer and as an investment banker, I spent the greater part of the first 15 years of my career developing and financing new power plant construction. In 2003, I became CEO of NRG Energy, Inc., and grew a previously bankrupt company over the next 12 years to become the third largest power generation company in the United States.

I am very proud of the company we built at NRG. We achieved top decile safety performance and top quartile reliability. We took care of our people, not laying off a single employee during the Great Recession of 2008-2009. We strove always to be a good neighbor in the communities which hosted our facilities. Most importantly, we took great pride in fulfilling the historic “three imperatives” mission of the American power industry: safe, affordable and reliable power to all Americans.

A few years into my tenure at NRG, it became clear to me that a fourth imperative was emerging for our industry: decarbonization. This was a particular challenge for our company because, of the 50 largest American power generation companies at the time, NRG was the second most carbon intensive and our baseload coal plants, and the men and women who operated them, were the heart and soul of our company.

Starting in 2006, we leaned hard into a multi-year, multi-billion-dollar strategy to revitalize our aging generation fleet by scaling the zero carbon elements of our business, building higher

efficiency natural gas facilities, and embracing technologies that would extend the life of our baseload coal plants by reducing their carbon intensity. We filed the first NRC permit for a new U.S. nuclear plant since 1979. We built a substantial utility-scale solar business. We began the first national EV public charging network. We built Petra Nova, then the world's largest carbon capture project. Many of these initiatives were enabled, in part, by assistance of DOE and catalyzed by the bipartisan actions of Congress, including the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

With respect to our existing coal fleet, we invested billions of dollars in back-end controls, but with these plants nearing the end of their design lives, with structural fatigue a real risk, we closed or mothballed several of them. To this day, these shutdowns are the most gut-wrenching decisions I have ever made as a business executive. We made every effort to redeploy our people at new plants across the country, but this provided little solace to the local communities. This showed me that even in big infrastructure, there is a very human scale impact.

I spent the better part of my career running power companies without, in truth, having any great technical understanding of how electricity is produced, but what I do understand is capital formation and capital deployment in and around the American energy sector. My career experience, living and working at the intersection of big capital and big energy projects, in my opinion, ideally suits me for the position you are considering me for today.

The newly created Undersecretary for Infrastructure position has one task, and one task only, to implement – to implement the provisions of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law consistent with the intent of this Congress. I am ready, willing, and able to serve in that role and I hope to perform this function in a manner that embodies the classic Midwest values to which I ascribe: decency, fairness and humility. I hope my service, if confirmed, will validate the trust the President and Secretary Granholm have placed in me, and make my family proud.

And most of all, I want to thank my wife and my children for supporting me in this disruptive step in our lives, and for allowing me to follow the call to public service.

Thank you for your consideration of me today. I look forward to your questions.