

NOMINATIONS HEARING

Tuesday, September 21, 2021

Chairman Senator Joe Manchin Opening Statement

- The Committee will come to order.
- We meet today to consider three pending nominations.
- The three nominees are:
 - Ms. Laura Daniel-Davis to be the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Land and Minerals Management;
 - Ms. Camille Touton to be the Commissioner of Reclamation; and
 - Ms. Sara Bronin to be the Chair of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.
- Welcome to all three nominees. Thank you for being here this morning and for your willingness to serve in these important positions. And welcome to each of your family members. Thank you, too, for being here today.

Ms. Laura Daniel-Davis

- The Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management oversees four of the great bureau and offices of the Department of the Interior:

- The Bureau of Land Management;
 - The Office of Surface Mining;
 - The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management; and
 - The Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement.
- All 6 of the Department's Assistant Secretaries have broad portfolios and perform essential functions, but the responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management are especially broad and they are of particular interest to many Members of this Committee.
- Fortunately, Ms. Daniel-Davis understands the challenge she is taking on.
- She is not new to the Department of the Interior or the issues before it.
- She served as the Chief of Staff to the Deputy Secretary of the Interior during the Clinton Administration, and as Chief of Staff to Secretary Salazar and Secretary Jewell during the Obama Administration.
- She has been serving as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management since January.

- Ms. Daniel-Davis will bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to the job.

Ms. Touton

The same can be said of our next nominee, Camille Touton, who has been nominated to be the Commissioner of Reclamation.

- The Commissioner's job is to manage much of the water in the western states and oversee a vast system of nearly 500 dams and over 300 reservoirs on which over 30 million Americans depend.
- In addition, the Commissioner is responsible for producing 40 billion kilowatt-hours of hydro-electricity each year.
- It is big job, but one for which Ms. Touton is exceptionally well prepared.
- She has worked on these issues on the House Natural Resources Committee, and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, and on this Committee when Senator Cantwell was our Ranking Member.
- She also served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science during the Obama Administration, and has been serving as the Deputy Commissioner of Reclamation since January.

- Like Ms. Daniel-Davis, Ms. Touton brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the position for which she has been nominated.

Ms. Bronin

- Our third nominee is Sara Bronin, who has been nominated to chair the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.
- The law that established the Advisory Council was enacted in the belief that “the spirit and direction of the Nation are founded upon and reflected in its historic heritage,” and that our historic foundations should be preserved.
- The Council was created to ensure that other federal agencies take our national heritage into account before they take actions that might harm or destroy nationally significant sites.
- The Advisory Council is just that—an advisory body, not a regulatory one. It cannot command or control.
- Its powers are to advise, to encourage, to recommend, to review, to comment, to inform, and to educate.
- The 24-member Council is an extraordinary body. It is made up of Cabinet Secretaries and other agency heads, a Governor, a mayor, the Architect of the Capitol, the heads of certain historic preservation organizations, and several

other historic preservation experts and citizens appointed by the President.

- The chairman alone serves full-time and is the only member who is confirmed by the Senate.
- For this reason, I think it is especially important that the Chair be someone of great ability and achievement who will have the respect of the Council she must lead and the agency heads she will seek to advise and persuade.
- I believe Ms. Bronin's academic achievements and her record of public service show she is well qualified for this important task.
- I want to thank all three nominees for being with us this morning and for their willingness to accept these important nominations.