Senator Joe Manchin's Floor Remarks on Nomination of Dr. Asmeret Berhe to be Director of the Office of Science

Tuesday, May 10, 2022

- Madam President, I am pleased to support the nomination of Dr. Asmeret Berhe to be the Director of the Office of Science at the Department of Energy.
- President Reagan famously complained that the Department of Energy never "produced a quart of oil or a lump of coal." But that was never the Department's job.
- The Department of Energy is as much a Department of Science and Technology as a Department of Energy.
- For nearly 50 years it has been at the forefront of scientific discovery and technology innovation.
- As a seedbed for science, the Department has given us the technologies to increase our energy production and use our resources in a cleaner and more efficient way.
- And the Office of Science lies at the heart of the Department's science mission.
- It is the nation's largest federal supporter of basic research

in the physical sciences.

- Its mission is to deliver the "scientific discoveries, capabilities, and major scientific tools to transform the understanding of nature and to advance the energy, economic, and national security of the United States."
- Leading this important scientific enterprise calls for scientist of great ability and vision.
- I believe Dr. Berhe is very qualified for this important job.
- Judging from the long list of academic honors and awards that she received and long list of scientific papers she has written, Dr. Behre has the scientific credentials the job requires.
- She is a Professor of Soil Biochemistry at the University of California, where she is also an Associate Dean of Graduate Education and holds an endowed chair in Earth Sciences and Geology.
- The Office of Science itself has long engaged in basic research relating to soil science and broader ecological questions, whether tracing radioactive elements through the

atmosphere or the flow of energy, water, and carbon through the Earth's natural systems.

- So her background is an asset and makes her very well suited to lead the Office of Science.
- Dr. Berhe is also an Adjunct Professor at the Salk Institute of Biological Studies and has been a Visiting Professor at E.T.H. in Zurich, where Albert Einstein studied physics.
- She has authored over a hundred scientific papers and has received over two dozen honors and awards for her scientific achievements.
- She is incredibly well qualified for this important post leading the Office of Science.
- I strongly support her nomination, and I urge a favorable vote on her nomination.