

NOMINATIONS BUSINESS MEETING FOLLOWED BY NOMINATIONS HEARING

Thursday, April 28, 2022

Chairman Manchin Opening Statement

- We meet today to consider three pending nominations and to vote on another.
- First, as soon as we get a quorum, we will vote on the nomination of Dr. Kathryn Huff to be the Assistant Secretary of Energy for Nuclear Energy.
- The Committee held a hearing on Dr. Huff's nomination 6 weeks ago, on March 17.
- I believe Dr. Huff is very well qualified for this important position.
- She has the academic training, as a physicist and a nuclear engineer.
- She has extensive experience, as a graduate research assistant at the Argonne and Idaho National Laboratories, as a postdoctoral fellow at Berkeley, as a professor at the University of Illinois, and as a nuclear program manager for the past year as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy at the Department of Energy.

- She has demonstrated her ability to handle the job, both through her performance as the Acting Assistant Secretary over the past year and at her hearing, where she showed a firm grasp on the nuclear issues in answering the Committee's questions.
- I strongly support her nomination and I urge a favorable vote to report her nomination.
- Following the vote on Dr. Huff's nomination, we will turn to today's hearing and our other three nominees.
- The three nominees are:
 - Dr. David Applegate to be the Director of the Geological Survey;
 - Ambassador Carmen Cantor to be the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular and International Affairs; and
 - Dr. Evelyn Wang to be the Director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy.
- We welcome all three nominees and thank each of them for being here this morning and for their willingness to serve in these important positions.
- Welcome, too, to each of your family members. Thank you all for being here as well.

Dr. Applegate

- Our first nominee, Dr. Applegate, has been nominated to head the U.S. Geological Survey.
- The Department of Energy often boasts of its 17 national laboratories as “crown jewels.” Well, the USGS is one of the Interior Department’s crown jewels.
- It was founded a century and a half ago to assess the nation’s geology and its water and mineral and other natural resources.
- It remains one of our oldest and most respected scientific institutions and our principal source of knowledge about our lands and waters, our mineral resources, and the natural hazards we face from volcanos, earthquakes, landslides, and floods.
- Dr. Applegate is extremely well versed in these matters.
- He has been with the USGS for the past 18 years—
 - For the first 7 years, as senior science advisor;
 - For the past 11 years, as the Associate Director for Natural Hazards; and
 - For the past year or so, as the Acting Director.
- Moreover, David is no stranger to this Committee.
- Bennett Johnston recruited David to work for the Committee as a science fellow, shortly after David received his doctorate in geology from MIT in 1994.

- I take great pleasure in welcoming him back to the Committee this morning.

Ambassador Cantor

- Our next nominee is Ambassador Carmen Cantor, who has been nominated to be the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Insular and International Affairs.
- The Department of the Interior—like this Committee—has important stewardship responsibilities for our insular areas—Guam, American Samoa, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Northern Mariana Islands.
- In addition, it oversees federal assistance under the Compacts of Free Association with the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.
- As we were reminded during our oversight hearing on the Compacts last month, the compacts with these 3 freely associated states are expiring and need to be renegotiated for all of our mutual benefit.
- So I am very pleased that the President has chosen Ambassador Cantor for this important position.
- She was born and educated in Puerto Rico.
- She is a career member of the Senior Executive Service.
- She is an experienced diplomat, who has held senior positions at the State Department.

- She has spent the last 2 and a half years as our Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia, a post to which the Senate confirmed her by voice vote.
- I believe Ambassador Cantor clearly has the knowledge, experience, and training this sensitive post calls for at this critical time.

Dr. Wang

- Our final nominee is Dr. Evelyn Wang, who has been nominated to head ARPA-E, the Advanced Research Projects Agency at the Department of Energy.
- ARPA-E had its roots in this Committee.
- It grew out of a request made by two of our former colleagues, Lamar Alexander and Jeff Bingaman, to the National Academy of Sciences to tell us what we needed to do to enhance science and technology so that the United States could compete and prosper in the 21st Century.
- The America COMPETES Act, and ARPA-E, which was authorized by the COMPETES Act, grew out of the Academy's recommendations.
- ARPA-E is charged with the task of overcoming technological barriers and developing transformative science and technology solutions.
- It is the chief innovation office in a Department whose primary mission is innovation.

- And to head this office, the law requires the director to be someone specially qualified to manage research programs and overcome technological barriers to the development of new, innovative energy technologies.
- As Secretary Granholm said, Dr. Wang “has overseen groundbreaking research in heat-transfer technology that has advanced clean energy and clean water solutions.”
- She is the head of the Mechanical Engineering Department at MIT and has served as the Associate Director of DOE’s Solid State Solar Thermal Energy Conversion Center.
- I believe all three of our nominees are well qualified for the offices to which the President has nominated them.
- I want to thank all three for being with us this morning and for their willingness to accept these important positions.