

**Opening Statement of
Senator Lisa Murkowski
December 17, 2013**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The Senate has certainly been spending an extraordinary amount of time on nominations lately and today is no exception. With both a business meeting and a hearing to consider the President's nominees for the Energy and Interior Departments on the agenda, we have an ambitious schedule before us.

A lot of discussion on the floor of late about nominations, but I know each member of this Committee takes the Senate's advice and consent role very seriously. As we move to report three nominees today, I think we can all agree that the Committee's work in thoroughly vetting candidates is crucial to the overall confirmation process.

For our hearing portion this morning, I would like to welcome each of our distinguished nominees to the Committee and thank them for their willingness to serve.

Dr. Kastner and Dr. Williams, while we did not get the opportunity to visit in person, your credentials are certainly impressive. As I noted at last week's confirmation hearing, I think Secretary Moniz is assembling a top-notch team to assist him with the important work being done by the Energy Department. I'm pleased with what I see coming forward out of DOE.

Mr. Kornze, I enjoyed our meeting last week and was greatly encouraged by your willingness to go up, be on the ground, see what the issues are in my state. As I've

mentioned, it's probably going to consume a lot more of your time than you might want, but you'll have fun. I can guarantee you'll have some good trips there, but it's a lot of hard work. I appreciate your willingness to learn and give the kind of commitment I'm looking for in a federal land manager for this country.

Ms. Schneider, I don't know you as well as Mr. Beaudreau, who is currently acting in the position for which you are now nominated. As you may know, I think Mr. Beaudreau has been doing a fine job where he is but he is now slated to take over the Policy, Management and Budget shop at Interior. Because the Assistant Secretary for Lands and Minerals Management has such a significant role in Alaska and in energy resource development nationwide, I look forward to learning more about your qualifications and priorities for this position.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

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