

Testimony of Preston "Wells" Griffith
Nominee for the Position of Under Secretary of Energy at the U.S. Department of Energy
Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
April 10, 2025

Chairman Lee, Ranking Member Heinrich, and distinguished members of the Committee:

It is a true honor to appear before this committee today as President Trump's nominee to serve as Under Secretary of Energy at the U.S. Department of Energy. I want to thank President Trump for nominating me to this important position, and I am grateful for the confidence he and Energy Secretary Wright have placed in me.

Before I begin my formal remarks, I would like to introduce the most important people in my life — my family. Joining me today is my wife, Catherine. In fact, today marks our 10th wedding anniversary and she's thrilled we are celebrating with a Senate hearing. I'm also proud to have our 8-year-old son, Wells, here with us. Their unwavering love, patience, and support have made this moment possible.

I would also like to recognize my mother, Donata, and my father, Preston, who is courageously battling amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's disease), a horrible and progressive neurodegenerative disease. Since I was a boy, his strength has inspired me every day — and does even more so today. Lastly, I am joined by many dear friends in the audience, and I want to acknowledge my brother, sisters, and their families, who couldn't be here in person but are watching from home. I would not be here without their support.

Like President Trump and Secretary Wright, I have a deep passion for public service and an appreciation for the role that energy plays in our lives. My first impressions about energy came as a young boy at our family-owned full-service gas station in Mobile, Alabama.

My grandfather started working at the station after returning from the Korean War and eventually bought it. My father began working there when he was 13 years old, and worked there until 2020, after he was officially diagnosed with ALS and had to retire.

Growing up, I spent my summers and holidays working alongside him — pumping gas, changing tires, washing windows in the Alabama heat. It was there that I first understood the real-world impact of energy — not in theory, but in practice.

I remember helping my dad change the gas price sign — learning about OPEC before I even knew what those letters stood for. And when gas prices were high, seeing firsthand customers choose between putting five or ten dollars in their tanks or buying groceries. When energy costs were high, Americans felt it immediately.

Energy wasn't just a commodity — it was a lifeline.

Above the three-bay garage doors at our station was a sign that read: “*Service is Our Business.*” That motto stuck with me, and in many ways, it shaped my life’s path. It’s what brought me to public service.

Since leaving our family’s gas station, I’ve had the privilege of serving the American people in multiple roles within the federal government. In President Trump’s first administration, I had the opportunity to work in the Secretary’s office at the Department of Energy and later as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Affairs. I then served at the White House as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Energy and Environment at the National Security Council, and also at the U.S. Development Finance Corporation.

In each of these roles, I worked alongside many career public servants, scientists, engineers, and professionals who are among the best in government. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed, I look forward to returning to work with them — and to serve with the same spirit of excellence and humility.

I have seen firsthand the role that the Department of Energy and its 17 National Labs play in securing America’s energy future — through research and innovation to unlocking our vast energy resources and technologies to scientific advancements. From fueling our economy to powering AI data centers to securing our national defense, energy is foundational to America’s future. America must lead — not follow — in this next era of energy transformation.

If confirmed, I will work every day to advance the Department’s mission efficiently and effectively and deliver on the President’s priorities: winning the AI arms race, lowering energy costs, advancing U.S. leadership in innovation, and ensuring Americans have access to affordable, reliable, and secure energy.

Chairman Lee, Ranking Member Heinrich, and members of the Committee — thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.