

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES



SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL, *Ranking Member*

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**Opening Statement
Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.)
Hearing to Consider Department of Energy, Department of the Interior and
U.S. Geological Survey Nominations
October 20, 2015**

“Good morning. We appreciate our colleague [Sen. Jack Reed] being here and speaking on behalf of the nominee. I thank the chairman for scheduling what I consider to be an important hearing. And I welcome all six of the nominees that are before us today because these are important positions.

“We have six nominees whose work really is the underpinning the missions of two of our departments that this committee has jurisdiction over. We have here before us this morning the top managers of the Department of the Interior and the Department of Energy. I consider these key essential people to helping our agencies work.

“We also have the leads of both agencies’ premier science groups, and they provide very important scientific research necessary for their departments to help carry out their missions.

“In addition, we have the head of the Nuclear Energy Office, who is responsible for designing safe nuclear reactors for the future and also finding a path forward for disposing of the waste from our current and past civilian and defense nuclear programs.

“And finally, we have the Inspector General for the Department of the Interior, who is responsible for ensuring the integrity of the department’s diverse and important operations.

“We are very fortunate, I believe, to have six highly qualified and experienced nominees in front of us. Four of the six individuals have actually been performing the functions of the offices to which they are nominated in their current jobs as the principal deputies to those offices—three of them for more than a year. So they have already demonstrated their fitness and ability to serve in the positions to which they have been nominated. Indeed, the committee already has approved Dr. Kimball’s nomination last year.

“I look forward to hearing from all of these nominees this morning, and I know that my colleagues will have great questions for each of them. So thank you for helping us move these important positions.”

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