

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
April 30, 2025 Hearing: *The Travnicek, Beyer, Garrish, and Abbey Nominations*
Questions for the Record Submitted to Mr. Tristan Abbey

Questions for the Record from Ranking Member Martin Heinrich

Question 1: Energy Information Administration (EIA) reports make important data on energy supply, demand and prices broadly available to both the public and private sector. The reports are essential for understanding market trends.

Given the recent release of the Executive Order 14215, “Ensuring Accountability for All Agencies”, how will you seek to maintain the independence of the EIA in its role as an independent statistical and analytical analysis so that EIA can remain a trusted, unbiased and transparent source for energy data now and in the future?

Response: The EIA plays a unique and vital role in providing objective energy data and analysis to policymakers, businesses and the public. That role is especially critical at a time of dynamic market challenges in global and domestic energy markets. If confirmed, I would work to uphold and strengthen EIA’s core principles of methodological rigor, nonpartisan analysis and open access to information. Independence does not mean isolation, it means maintaining clear boundaries between data production and policy formulation and ensuring our work remains transparent, timely and responsive to evolving energy trends.

Question 2: Last week, EIA released the 2025 Annual Energy Outlook, the first to include measures enacted under the Biden Administration, including the IRA and IIJA. The EIA’s credibility rests on its transparent and unbiased work products and consistency in sticking strictly to current law and policy in its forecasts.

If confirmed, will you commit to basing projections only on current policy and fairly representing a balance of energy sources and scenarios?

Response: Yes. The Annual Energy Outlook and other reports must reflect a balanced representation of energy sources and market drivers. That includes clearly communicating underlying assumptions so that policymakers, industry leaders and the public can draw informed conclusions based on unbiased data. One exception to basing projections only on current policy is cases in which projections (other than the so-called Reference Case) are intended to consider hypotheticals, such as varying supply or economic assumptions. In such cases, as is current and long-standing practice, any hypotheticals will be clearly identified for the reader.

Question 3: The Government Accountability Office plays a vital role in making sure agencies are implementing the law as passed by Congress and ensuring American’s taxpayer dollars are being used the way Congress said they should.

In order for GAO to do its job, it needs cooperation from agencies in responding to their oversight work in a timely manner.

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If confirmed, will you commit to be responsive to GAO's outreach and requests for information without delay?

Response: If confirmed, I commit to working with GAO and other federal agencies.

Question 4: Regarding load growth from data centers and cryptomining:

- How well do you think EIA measures demand from data centers and cryptomining facilities?
- What work should EIA do with the national labs to better characterize current and future demand?
- Are there ways for EIA to obtain the information it needs while respecting industry needs to keep certain intellectual property secret?

Response: If confirmed, I would support efforts to improve EIA's data collection and modeling capabilities in this area. My understanding is that the EIA has published some limited analysis. Among my priorities would be to better understand these pre-existing efforts and to consider what else can be done. That includes collaborating with DOE's national laboratories and other technical experts to better understand the operation profiles, technology trends and load characteristics of these facilities. EIA can also continue to refine its modeling tools to capture a more granular picture of how digital infrastructure is shaping electricity demand. At the same time, I recognize the need to strike a careful balance of obtaining the information necessary for accurate reports while respecting proprietary business information, data privacy and the undesirability of reporting requirements that place undue burdens on respondents. I believe there are constructive ways to engage with industry to enhance data transparency without compromising intellectual property or competitiveness.

Question 5: Recent press reports note that EIA has lost more than 35 percent of its staff. Given the federal hiring freeze in place, the next EIA Administrator will have to make critical decisions about how to distribute EIA's remaining resources to achieve its mission.

- How will you go about doing this?
- What do you see as the top priorities for EIA, and how will you provide leadership at this time in order to make sure DOE fulfills Congressional mandates, including those in the IIA?

Response: If confirmed, my first step would be to conduct a clear-eyed assessment of EIA's current staffing, workloads, and programming needs, with a focus on aligning resources with the areas of highest impact and statutory responsibility. In terms of priorities, I believe EIA must deliver timely, objective data and analysis across the full range of energy sources, including electricity, fuels and emerging technologies. Leadership in this environment means setting clear priorities and focusing on core analytical competencies. I would work closely with DOE

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stakeholders and Congress to identify any flexibility and partnerships that could help fill critical gaps.

Questions for the Record from Senator Steve Daines

Question 1: Mr. Abbey, if confirmed will you commit to ensuring that the Energy Information Administration remains a non-partisan, impartial and transparent agency for the dissemination of energy information?

Response: If confirmed, I will be fully committed to preserving and strengthening EIA's role as a transparent source of energy data and analysis.

Question 2: Mr. Abbey, EIA publishes outlooks and projections on a wide range of energy topics. These outlooks are used for policy making as well as market decisions. If confirmed, what actions will you take to provide transparency and accountability for EIA published outlooks?

Response: EIA's outlooks and projections play an important role in informing public policy and private-sector decisions. If confirmed, I would make it a top priority to ensure that all EIA outlooks are developed with the highest standards of transparency and analytical rigor. At a minimum, one way to strengthen accountability is by meeting statutory requirements and adhering to a consistent publication schedule for the Annual Energy Outlook.

Questions for the Record from Senator Maria Cantwell

Question 1: Petroleum Markets

I have seen repeatedly that transparency and comprehensive data, like the products that EIA provides, are necessary elements to ensuring that our oil and gas markets are operating fairly and prices are being set based on the fundamentals of supply and demand. That is why I would like to explore whether EIA is collecting sufficient data from the oil and gas supply chain to ensure consumers are being protected from market manipulation and fraud. My understanding is that the general 1977 law providing EIA with the authority to collect data from the oil and gas industry supply chain provides EIA with considerable discretion on what data it can request.

- Do you believe that collecting more oil and gas supply chain data from industry could increase our understanding of supply and demand and pricing trends in the physical and derivatives oil and gas markets?
- How could collecting more oil and gas supply chain data from industry provide market analysts within non-government organizations, academia, and regulatory agencies with the tools needed to review, track, and analyze these markets?
- Do you support collecting further disaggregated data by week (rather than by month) for additional downstream segments below the refinery level including terminals, wholesalers, and retail levels of the supply chain?

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Response: EIA data is widely used by the federal government, academia, analysts and state regulators. Expanding access to relevant supply chain data, when feasible, could strengthen market oversight and analysis, especially in light of increasing complexity in physical and financial energy markets. If confirmed, I would also want to ensure that any expansion of data collection continues to protect confidential business information, does not impose an undue burden on respondents, and upholds EIA's statutory role as a trusted data provider. If confirmed, I would be happy to engage with you and your staff on collecting disaggregated weekly data.

Questions for the Record from Senator Catherine Cortez Masto

Question 1: Mr. Abbey, you stated the following in your written testimony: "In my view, EIA must clear the decks of unfinished projects, recruit and retain the best talent, develop the most powerful analytical capabilities, and modernize its information systems."

Are you aware of recent reports – which have found that over 100 EIA employees have resigned or been fired by the Trump Administration? What is your response to that? And if confirmed, how would you counter these firings to deliver on the ambitions outlined in your written testimony?

Response: If confirmed, I would prioritize an assessment of EIA's current capabilities and resource needs. This would involve identifying critical gaps in expertise and determining how best to allocate existing resources to maintain the quality and reliability of EIA's work. I would also explore opportunities to collaborate with other federal agencies to supplement EIA's analytical capabilities.

Question 2: If confirmed, would you commit to publishing objective, honest energy data? And specifically, how would you work to uphold EIA's purpose to serve as an independent source of energy information?

Response: If confirmed, I will fully commit to publishing energy data that is objective, transparent and accurate energy data. The strength of EIA lies in its independence and its adherence to fact-based analysis.

Question 3: As you noted in your written testimony, establishing a critical mineral outlook could be extremely beneficial for our country. If confirmed, can you please expand on specific action items you'd take to ensure that a critical minerals report is produced and published in a timely manner?

Response: Given the challenging geopolitical and strategic environment, it is my view that we do not have time to reinvent the wheel. If confirmed, I would begin by working with EIA career staff and interagency partners to assess the current data landscape and identify what information is already available, where gaps exist and what partnerships could help close those gaps. I would want to ensure that the outlook is developed with the same hallmarks that define all of EIA's work to that can serve a wide range of users from government to industry to academia. My goal

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would be to ensure this report becomes a regular and trusted product that evolves as market conditions and technologies change.

Questions for the Record from Senator John W. Hickenlooper

Question 1: Do you commit to protecting the Energy Information Administration's status as a semi-independent agency and preventing alteration of EIA data, analysis, and forecasts or any requirement of approval or sign off from officers or employees of the U.S. government or elected officials outside the EIA?

Response: Yes. If confirmed, I would follow the law and reinforce a culture that prioritizes transparency, methodological rigor and nonpartisan reporting.

Question 2: Do you commit to retaining current staffing levels at EIA to ensure continued, trusted research and analysis and consistent publication quality and timelines?

Response: If confirmed, I would prioritize an assessment of EIA's current capabilities and resource needs. This would involve identifying critical gaps in expertise and determining how best to allocate existing resources to maintain the quality and reliability of EIA's work. I would also explore opportunities to collaborate with other federal agencies to supplement EIA's analytical capabilities.