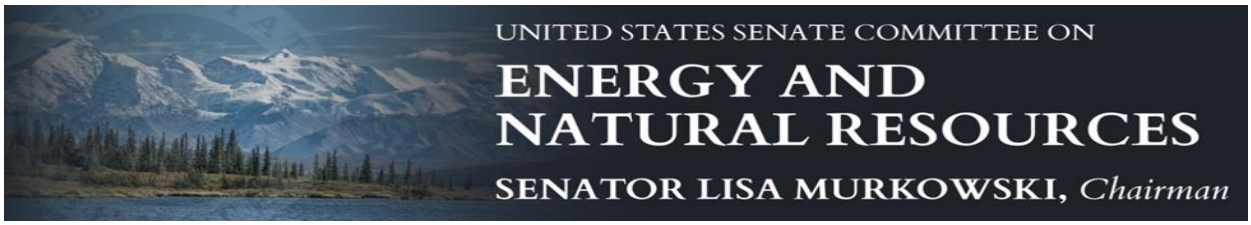

Opening Statement
ENR Business Meeting
Chairman Lisa Murkowski
September 19, 2017

Good morning, everyone. The committee will come to order.

We are scheduled to meet twice today, ~~and~~ right now we begin our business meeting to report five nominations – two for the Department of the Interior, two for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and one for the Department of Energy. ~~Immediately~~And then immediately after we conclude this meeting, we will move on to our full committee hearing on vegetation management on federal lands.

But before we begin, in recognizing that we're still waiting for a quorum to come together here, I ~~want~~ would like to take a moment to note the loss that we had last week, ~~by~~ in recognizing the life and service of Senator Pete Domenici. Many of us served with Senator ~~Pete~~ Domenici, he was the longest serving Senator from New Mexico, I hadn't realized that – that's quite significant. He was in my mind a ~~true~~ real statesman, he was my Chairman when I came to the Committee and I was just very honored to not only call him my Chairman but ~~was honored~~ to call him my friend – he was a great, great, great guy.~~.~~ As our Chairman and then Ranking Member, he shepherded two major energy bills into law in I think a very strong~~the~~ bipartisan tradition for which our Committee ~~is~~ has been known. He was also a tremendous champion of our national labs, always spoke very highly about them.

He was the one that really advanced that whole idea on the nuclear renaissance and got people excited about the role that this country could play when it came to~~for~~ nuclear ~~power~~energy, but he was also weighted in in so many significant areas when it came to our nation's energy policy. ~~and for many other vital components of our energy policy.~~

I think we can think about so many of the issues that we're working on here today, and I think it's fair to say that Pete started so many of them. Senator Cantwell just reminded me that in Indian Affairs you had a series of tributes to Senator Domenici as well, I missed that, but again another area where he was a leader - and of course then on the Budget Committee, again you wanted to know where the numbers were and you wanted to understand so much of our budget policy, and Senator Domenici was influencial in so many of those other areas. We recognize that~~Pete's~~ his passing is a considerable~~was a~~ loss for his family, for his friends, ~~and~~ for many of his former staff – ~~a few of whom are still with us here on the committee~~there are many on the committee that worked with Senator Domenici throughout his tenure. ~~It~~ His loss is certainly ~~was~~ a loss for ~~the State of~~ New Mexico, but I think it is fair to say ~~and, really,~~ for our country as well. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his wife, Nancy, and to all of his children and his grandchildren.

I will be brief in the rest of my comments, this morning, so that we can conclude our business meeting and move on to our hearing, as quickly as possible.

Our Interior Department nominees are Joe Balash to be the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management and Ryan Nelson to be Solicitor.

Our FERC nominees are Richard Glick and Kevin McIntyre, who will be designated as FERC's chairman upon his confirmation.

Finally, our Energy Department nominee is David Jonas to be General Counsel.

All of these nominees have made it through their hearings and answered the questions submitted for the record by our members. I appreciate their willingness to serve and they will all have my vote this morning. I want to again thank Rich Glick for his service to our committee over the years, I would also like to recognize and thank ~~and~~ Joe Balash for his service to Alaska and to this chamber as Senator Sullivan's Chief of Staff.

We are moving expeditiously on these nominees so that Secretary Zinke and Secretary Perry can have their teams in place, and so that FERC does not just have to have a ~~its~~ minimum quorum, but instead a full complement of five commissioners.

Once we achieve a quorum ~~of our own~~, which I think we're there, I will ask that members hold their comments so that we can conduct up to five voice or roll call votes. Once those votes are complete, members will be able to make any comments that they have related to the business meeting, and then we will move to our full committee hearing.

~~Senator Cantwell, I will now turn to you for your opening comments.~~So Senator Cantwell.

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