

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON

# ENERGY & NATURAL RESOURCES

SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL, *Ranking Member*



@EnergyDems

## **Opening Statement Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) On Rick Perry's Nomination to Be Secretary of Energy January 19, 2017**

"Thank you, Madam Chairman. Welcome, Governor Perry, and welcome to your family. Congratulations on your nomination.

"In case you may have forgotten, you once called for the abolishment of this agency. I suspect that now, having had a chance to learn about this department, you have a very different opinion.

"The department, as the chair just mentioned, plays an essential role in protecting our national security, our economic security, our energy security and our environmental security. Its wide-ranging missions impact almost every aspect of our lives.

"The Department of Energy is a science and technology powerhouse, with an unrivaled network of national laboratories, accelerating innovation and making sure our U.S. manufacturing base stays competitive.

"The Department of Energy has helped make the United States a world leader in clean energy and energy efficiency technology development. There are now more people working in installing solar panels in this country than working in coal or oil and gas extraction.

"The Department of Energy has built and maintained our nuclear deterrent, led the science and technology development that continues to guide our ongoing nonproliferation efforts and that manages the nuclear weapons complex facilities, such as Hanford, that helped us win World War II and the Cold War. So it is very important that we talk today about our steadfast determination on cleanup at Hanford, and I will get into that more.

"Also as threats to our national security continue to evolve, the Department of Energy's mission has to evolve. The Quadrennial Energy Review was done by the Obama administration's Secretary Moniz, finding that cybersecurity and emergency responses are critical.

"Just as the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) helped us in the development of the Internet, it is now time for ARPA-E to help us in the wired economy of the future and making sure it is well protected.



“It will be the job of the next Secretary of Energy to be a good overseer of this enterprise—not only to maintain the achievements of the past 40 years, but to maintain U.S. leadership in an increasingly competitive global market for clean energy technologies and to protect the electric grid from the growing threat of cyber-attacks. Leading the national labs is going to be a critical aspect of this leadership and leading the R&D is paramount.

“It is our job today to consider how well you will do that job.

“So like many of my colleagues, I am deeply concerned by some of the things that Governor Perry has said in the past about climate science. We will get to this in more detail.

“I believe that it is the consensus of the scientific community that climate change is real. It is happening now, and it is due to human activity. Yesterday, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) just announced that 2016 was the warmest year on record.

“In the Arctic, where warming is happening faster than any place on earth, the melting of sea ice levels is at an all-time high. How do we know all of this? We know, because the Department of Energy does all of the research.

“We want to make sure that climate science in the Arctic is not just something the Department of Energy, its national laboratories and its university partners are doing. We need people to understand that it is not just some academic pursuit. We need the information for very important decisions. The nature and the pace of these changes have serious impacts for the Department of Defense investments and the kinds of infrastructure we need to stand up in the Arctic.

“We are an Arctic nation. That means that this part of the world is going to be coveted by many nations. Its shipping lanes, its trade routes, its defense issues are going to be central. So as Sen. Murkowski could also tell you, it has implications for Arctic communities and their way of life is also impacted. In my Washington state alone, our fisheries industry and shellfish industry were almost devastated by ocean acidification.

“So the Department of Energy’s scientific horsepower is key to understanding these trends. I hope you can understand there is widespread anxiety about President-Elect Trump’s intention to dismantle these scientific capabilities or simply just starve them for resources.

“We hope that you, Governor Perry, will be someone who understands and believes in this science mission of this agency and will lead it to the best of your abilities



“Mission Innovation, which is the priority of this agency in continuing to move forward with renewable energy, is also critically important. Almost 2 million Americans work in energy efficiency alone, driving significant savings to consumers by these advancements.

“The Quadrennial Energy Review (QER) estimates that we will need to fill 1.5 million new energy jobs by 2030, most of which will be in clean energy and grid modernization.

“What we have seen through the innovation that has happened through Sandia National Laboratories, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the University of Washington, and many other individuals is that the cost of utility scale solar has dropped 64 percent since 2008, which caused solar energy last year to lead all forms of energy in new capacity installations in the United States. We have seen energy efficiency in buildings give back billions to consumers in savings.

“More than 115,000 electric vehicles were sold in the U.S. in 2015, doubling the amount sold in 2012. And DOE’s Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) office helped bring down the cost of electric vehicles (EVs) through research on better batteries.

“All of these energy innovations rely on the important investments that are made by the Department of Energy and the national labs that support them.

“The choice before us, in my opinion, Governor Perry, is pretty clear: the Trump administration can either cling to the fossil fuel industry of the past or continue to lead on the innovations that are going to be leading technologies in the world and put the U.S. in a clear leadership position. I hope that you will understand that these missions are so important.

“Along with that is also the mission of nuclear waste cleanup, which is almost 20 percent of the agency’s budget. The science and technology that underpins our ability to clean up here is critically important, as well as protecting us through nuclear nonproliferation efforts.

“As I mentioned earlier, the Quadrennial Energy Review could not be clearer on the issue of cybersecurity. In light of recent revelations about Russian hacking, the next Secretary of Energy needs to take very seriously the threats to our nation to our electricity grid. We are increasingly becoming a wired economy. My constituents spend night and days developing new technologies. They deserve a president and an Energy Secretary who are going to take the threats of Russian hacking seriously and defend us against them. I hope that we can go into more detail in questions about this.



“I also want to make sure that you understand that the past Energy Secretary is leaving you with a roadmap for cybersecurity. I hope you will take it and provide the leadership that our nation needs to stop our vulnerabilities against something so important and protect the innovation economy of the future from incessant attacks by foreign entities.

“With that, and on behalf of the 15,000 Washington workers that work at Hanford and the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), I hope that you will take what we have said here today about science, innovation and investment very seriously. I look forward to asking you questions, and congratulations again on being nominated for this important agency. Thank you.”

###