



**Opening Statement
DOE Nominations Hearing
Chairman Lisa Murkowski
August 16, 2018**

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

We're here today to consider two nominees for the Department of Energy:

- Mr. William Cooper to be General Counsel; and
- Mr. Lane Genatowski to be Director of the Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy, we know it around here as ARPA-E.

Welcome to you both and thank you for your willingness to serve.

To our committee members, happy to be back here in Washington, D.C. in August – not. I can think of so many other places that I would rather be, should be: King Cove, Gustavus, Metlakatla, Valdez, those were all the places that I missed in this week, but that's my problem not yours. I know that you all have up to be here, so I appreciate the fact that you are here.

Hopefully we will be able to conclude our business expeditiously here, demonstrating once again that the Energy Committee is here to work, here to serve, any time of the year. You may notice that I, as the founding member of the "coalition of the cranky" am going to continue in that honorary title.

So, gentlemen with that, believe me I'm not going to take it out on you. I do appreciate your willingness, I do appreciate the opportunity to introduce both of you today, to hear from you as you respond to our questions. I will say that I'm impressed with the experience and qualifications that each of you bring to the table.

Mr. Cooper, if you are confirmed to be General Counsel, you will be tasked with providing legal advice to the Secretary and ensuring that the Department's operations are compliant with the law. This requires an independent individual who is committed to a careful interpretation of both the law and precedent, regardless of how that advice may be received. That, in turn, requires both confidence and backbone, but your years of experience in the House of Representatives and in private practice bode well.

I would note that we have received several letters in support of Mr. Cooper's nomination, and ask unanimous consent that those be added to the record of today's hearing.

Mr. Genatowski, I have to like you already, "owski" is as a good way to end any name – Cantowski, I don't know Hironowski, we could really make this work all around the Committee. But, aside from the name I'm actually envious of the job you have been nominated for, because ARPA-E in my view is a place where great things happen, great energy happens, and so you're going to be in a good place. ARPA-

E is not well known outside of academic and entrepreneurial circles, but to me it is both critical and fascinating.

ARPA-E is helping to bridge the gap on high-risk research and development technologies that have promise but might not otherwise be pursued. We know that this is difficult work, but the program is pushing boundaries and producing results, and that's why it has garnered strong support from both sides of our committee.

While a few have questioned your background in finance, as opposed to being a scientist, I happen to think that your private-sector experience could be useful as projects and companies seek to navigate the so called 'valley of death.'

And while much of what you encounter may seem esoteric – whether advanced carbon capture materials or efforts to turn seaweed into biofuels – you will be right on the cutting edge, working with many of our nation's best and brightest minds, to develop those technologies that can transform our world for the better, so again, a pretty neat place to be.

If members have additional questions after our hearing concludes, any questions for the record will be due at the close of business today. With our extended August session, it may be possible to move these nominees this work period, should they prove qualified and have sufficient support in committee.

As we close, I also want to note my growing concern about the number of nominees we have reported from our committee, who are still pending on the Senate calendar. We now have six nominees waiting for confirmation, with one of them having waited for more than a full year, and the nominees before us today could soon bring that total to eight.

We've been doing our job here in committee, we've been cooperative, but we have to do better on the Senate floor. Given the backlog of nominees awaiting consideration, I'm hopeful we can reach agreement to move nearly all of ours by unanimous consent, and I urge every member to help in that effort.

Senator Cantwell, I turn to you this morning for your opening comments.

###