

# NOMINATIONS HEARING

Tuesday, August 3, 2021

## Chairman Joe Manchin's Opening Statement

- The Committee will come to order.
- We meet today to consider three pending nominations.
- The three nominees are:
  - Dr. Geraldine Richmond to be the Under Secretary for Science at the Department of Energy;
  - Ms. Cynthia Stachelberg to be the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Policy, Management, and Budget; and
  - Dr. Asmeret Berhe to be the Director of the Office of Science at the Department of Energy.
- Welcome to all three nominees. Thank you for being here this morning and for your willingness to serve in these important positions. And welcome to each of your family members. Thank you, too, for being here today.

## *Dr. Richmond*

- The office of Under Secretary for Science, to which Dr. Richmond has been nominated, was established by the Energy Policy Act of 2005 in recognition of the important role that science and scientific research plays within the Department of Energy.
- The Under Secretary for Science serves as the Secretary's principal advisor on science and technology, monitors the Department's wide-ranging researching and development programs, and oversees the management of the national laboratories.
- By law, the Under Secretary for Science must have an extensive background in science or engineering.
- Dr. Richmond very clearly meets this test:
  - she holds a doctorate in physical chemistry from Berkeley;
  - she has been a professor at the University of Oregon for the past 26 years;
  - she is the author of more than 200 scientific papers; and
  - she has received dozens of honorary awards, medals,

prizes, degrees, and other honors in recognition of her scientific achievements.

- If confirmed, as I am sure she will be, Dr. Richmond will be only the fifth person—and the first woman—to hold this important office.

### *Ms. Stachelberg*

- Our next nominee is Winnie Stachelberg, who has been nominated to be the Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Policy, Management, and Budget.
- The office of an Assistant Secretary for Administration was originally established by President Truman and did not require Senate confirmation.
- Congress created the current statutory Assistant Secretaryship in 1971, in recognition of the importance of the office's functions and to increase its stature and effectiveness.
- In some respects, the Department of the Interior is a collection of separate bureaus. The Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget helps cement them together by developing policy, managing operations, and formulating budgets across the breadth of the Department.

- The Assistant Secretary serves as the Secretary's principal policy advisor and the Department's Chief Financial Officer.
- She oversees a diverse collection of offices, ranging from the Budget Office to the Wildland Fire Office, and from the Office of Native Hawaiian Relations to the Office of Natural Resources Revenue.
- It is an important job, and I am pleased to see that Ms. Stachelberg has a graduate degree in public administration and has worked as a budget analyst at the Office of Management and Budget.

***Dr. Berhe***

- Our third nominee, Dr. Berhe, has been nominated to be the Director of the Office of Science.
- Although the Department is named the Department of Energy, science has always been at the core of the Department.
- But as a seedbed for science, the Department has given us the technologies to increase our energy production and use our resources in a cleaner way. It has given us supercomputers and nuclear deterrence without testing.

- It has even helped developed the internet.
- The Office of Science lies at heart of the Department's science mission.
- The Office's mission, by law, is to deliver the "scientific discoveries, capabilities, and major scientific tools to transform the understanding of nature and to advance the energy, economic, and national security of the United States."
- That is no small task.
- Judging from the list of the scientific papers you have written, and the list of academic honors and awards that you have received, Dr. Behre, it is clear that you have the scientific credentials the job requires.
- Again, I want to extend a warm welcome to all three of our distinguished nominees, and thank them for being here this morning and for their willingness to undertake these important positions.