

## NOMINATIONS HEARING

Tuesday, October 19, 2021

### Chairman Manchin's Opening Statement

- The Committee will come to order.
- We meet today to consider three pending nominations.
- The three nominees are:
  - Mr. Willie Phillips to be a Member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission;
  - Mr. Brad Crabtree to be the Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy and Carbon Management; and
  - Mr. Charles Sams to be the Director of the National Park Service.
- 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.
- Our first nominee, Mr. Phillips has been nominated to the seat on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission vacated by Neil Chatterjee at the end of August.

- I have often said that the best FERC is a fully seated FERC.
- I am pleased to have Mr. Phillips's nomination before us this morning so we can get FERC back to full strength as soon as possible.
- I am especially pleased that the President has nominated someone of Mr. Phillips's stature and experience.
- The law establishing FERC says that "members of the Commission shall be individuals who, by demonstrated ability, background, training, or experience, are specially qualified to assess fairly the needs and concerns of all affected by Federal energy policy."
- Mr. Phillips meets that test.
- He has regulated natural gas and electric utilities as a member of the District of Columbia's Public Service Commission for the past 7 years.
- He has chaired the Commission for the past 3 years.
- He has worked in the energy field for nearly 20 years, as a regulator, as the Assistant General Counsel for the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, and a lawyer representing utility clients.
- As a regulator, he has shouldered the responsibility for keeping the lights on, natural gas lines safe, and people's

rates low.

- He will bring valuable experience and perspective to the Commission, and I am pleased to support his nomination.
- Our next nominee is Brad Crabtree, who has been nominated to be the Assistant Secretary of Energy for Fossil Energy and Carbon Management.
- Although the title is new, the office is over 40 years old, and its statutory basis is older still, older even than the Department itself.
- Over 60 years ago, the Coal Research Act of 1960 directed the Secretary of the Interior to “develop through research new and more efficient methods” of using our abundant coal resources for the nation’s benefit.
- That duty still exists and now rests with the Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy and Carbon Management.
- The role fossil fuels play in our energy mix and their impact on the global climate has changed dramatically in the past 60 years.
- But our reliance on coal to meet our energy needs and support the national welfare remains and will continue for decades to come.
- That is why research and development on fossil energy and

on carbon management is now more important than ever.

- Adding “Carbon Management” to the office name recognizes the need to manage carbon, but it also acknowledges our need to continue using fossil fuels.
- It acknowledges, as I have often said, that we must innovate not eliminate.
- I believe you understand this, Mr. Crabtree. You have been the Great Plains Institute’s Vice President for Carbon Management for the past 9 years.
- You have previously testified to the importance of carbon capture, use, and storage technologies, and have worked with state officials and industrial companies to promote their deployment.
- I look forward to hearing your thoughts on how we might better manage carbon from our fossil resources this morning.
- Our third nominee is Charles Sams, who has been nominated to head the National Park Service.
- This Committee oversees dozens of offices, bureaus, and services that perform important regulatory or management functions.
- But none has a deeper connection with the American

people than the National Park Service.

- The National Park Service is the steward and guardian of the nation's most iconic landscapes and its most treasured historic landmarks.
- It manages them for the benefit and enjoyment of the American people, and it has the duty to preserve them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.
- Our national parks are our national heritage and a priceless treasure.
- Serving as the Director of the National Park Service is a sacred trust.
- Remarkably, the National Park Service has been without a Senate-confirmed Director since January 2017—the longest lapse since the Office was established in 1916.
- By law, the Director of the National Park Service must “have substantial experience and demonstrated competence in land management and natural or cultural resource conservation.”
- Mr. Sams clearly has worked in the natural resource and conservation management field for over 25 years and clearly meets this test.

- I want to thank all three nominees for being with us this morning and for their willingness to accept these important nominations.