

Opening Statement
Steven Eric Winberg
Nominee to be Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy at the Department of Energy
Nominations Hearing
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
September 26, 2017

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Cantwell, members of the committee, and staff, thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this nominations hearing. I am extremely honored to appear before you as President Trump's nominee to be the Department of Energy's Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy.

Thank you for the opportunity to meet prior to this hearing in order for me to better understand your interests and priorities at the Department of Energy (DOE). Your thoughtful insights and counsel on energy needs in the United States and in the states you represent were informative and helpful. I learned a great deal and will carry those lessons with me if I am confirmed.

I would also like to thank President Trump and Secretary Perry for displaying their confidence in me by nominating and supporting me. This is both humbling and an exciting time for me and, if I have the honor to serve, I look forward to working closely with all of you and the knowledgeable, hard-working people at the Department of Energy. In order to address the numerous challenges and opportunities that face our domestic fossil energy resources, it will require consistent collaboration between multiple levels of government and private industry. I believe that, if confirmed, my past experiences have prepared me well for this position.

I have both family and friends here today and want to take a minute to introduce you to my family. First, my wife, Anne, sitting directly behind me. I am blessed to have her in my life and for her strong support. My sister, Christina Gutwein and her husband Dan; my brother David Winberg; Anne's brother Mike Nolan; and friends and colleagues. Thank you all for being with me today. My daughters, Lauren Winberg, and Anna Winberg are watching from Denver while they prepare for Anna's upcoming wedding. Watching from Pittsburgh, are Anne's children, Rebecca Burns and Christopher Burns.

I am especially grateful to have my parents, Mary and Harry Winberg, with me today. My mother, has been the rock in our family, quietly and resolutely holding our family together. My father served for 29 years in the U.S. Air Force. He served in both Korea and Vietnam and was awarded the Purple Heart when his plane was shot down in North Korea and he was wounded during the extraction effort. That close call makes me feel blessed to be here today but is also a reminder to me that, if confirmed, this is my opportunity to serve my country.

I have spent my entire career in the private fossil energy sector developing and demonstrating emerging coal, oil and natural gas technologies for both the production and the use of these fuels.

I have also been involved in a variety of policy issues affecting fossil energy and recognize the critical importance of the interface between policy and technology development. Sometimes policy drives technology and sometimes technology drives policy. Our goal must be to develop technologies that allow us to use our abundant, domestic resources in a sustainable, efficient, and environmentally-sound manner.

I have been directly involved in developing fossil energy technologies that improve combustion efficiency and reduce emissions. Early in my career, I focused on reducing criteria pollutants such as SO₂, NO_x and particulates. To that end, I have two patents from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office for innovations that reduce NO_x emissions from coal-fueled boilers. Over my 39-year career, great progress has been made on both efficiency and emissions reduction. Progress has also been made developing technologies applied to the production of fossil energy, thus lowering the cost, reducing the environmental footprint and improving safety. The steady technology advancements in both the production and use of fossil fuels have resulted in low cost, reliable, abundant and sustainable energy for the United States and I am proud to have been part of these advancements.

DOE has been at the forefront of developing the vast majority of the fossil energy technologies that are employed both here in the United States and around the world. I am excited about what can be further accomplished at the Department as fossil energy continues to play an important role in the nation's energy mix. If confirmed, I will work hard to keep the United States in the lead on developing the next generation of coal, oil and natural gas technologies. The Department's leadership and expertise, when coupled with private industry, can serve as a catalyst for the development of transformational energy technologies.

My personal and professional experiences have contributed to a strong understanding of the broad needs of the energy sector. If confirmed, I look forward to serving as the Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy and to working in close cooperation with the members of this committee and your staff, Secretary Perry, and the talented and dedicated staff at DOE. I will put my private sector experience to work to augment the fine work being done at DOE to maintain the affordable, reliable energy that adds so much value to our daily lives and to our Nation's prosperity.

I look forward to your questions.