

U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON
**ENERGY &
NATURAL RESOURCES**



SENATOR MARIA CANTWELL, *Ranking Member*

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**Opening Statement
Senator Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.)
Conference Committee Meeting on S. 2012
September 8, 2016**

“Thank you, Madam Chairman, and thank you for convening and chairing the conference today. I thank all our colleagues who have joined us here. I certainly welcome our House colleagues, and look forward to hearing each and every one of their statements today.

“In April, the Senate voted 85-12 to pass the first comprehensive energy bill, as my colleague said, in nine years. And so, I want to thank the staff on both sides of the aisle for everybody’s hard work on that. I certainly thank Chairman Murkowski for that hard work, because she and I did work closely on that legislation with a mix of ideas from more than half of our Senate colleagues. That means that this legislation that we passed had more than 50 senators’ individual provisions included in the bill—so it was a well-worked process by our Senate colleagues.

“Even saying that, I don’t think it’s a perfect bill that we passed out of the Senate. But it was a very conscious decision to work jointly on a path that moves us forward, so I hope that this conference committee will do the same thing, because that is how we got great results.

“I think all of us can agree that modernizing and securing our energy infrastructure is key to our nation’s competitiveness, particularly in a global economy.

“The Senate bill includes a number of much-needed provisions that enhance energy efficiency, that save consumers billions of dollars, that update our electricity grid, that increase our reliance on clean energy and that help train the workforce we need. In addition, the bill makes important investments in smart buildings, advanced energy storage technologies, composite materials and vehicle batteries.

“I also was very pleased to work on a bipartisan basis in a very diligent manner to provide language permanently authorizing the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Our colleagues on both sides of the aisle provided language to update that provision. This is one of the preeminent programs in our country for preserving open space and for growing the outdoor recreation economy that is so important to the Northwest. It is thousands of jobs and, millions—actually I think billions of dollars—in consumer spending.



“I am optimistic that this conference committee can resolve the differences between the House and Senate bills, which will result in a bill the president can sign.

“So I take my colleague from Michigan’s words—we don’t need to be pushing forward ideas that are going to be threatened by a veto. Instead, let’s work together to get a policy that can move us forward.

“This country is experiencing a very dramatic transformation in energy. It is important that we are updating the policies at the national level to help that transformation continue to take place. So I look forward to working with my colleagues, and as I said earlier, hearing from each of our House colleagues about this and their important ideas coming from the House, so we can work together and get a bill that can be signed by the president before the end of the year.”

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