



**Opening Statement**  
**ENR Hearing on DOI/DOE Reorganization and Modernization**  
**Chairman Lisa Murkowski**  
**July 19, 2018**

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

We're here today to examine the administration's efforts to reorganize and modernize the Department of Energy and the Department of the Interior.

As a point of reference, in March 2017, President Trump issued an Executive Order directing all agencies, across the federal government, to examine their structures and find ways to be less wasteful, reduce inefficiencies, and improve accountability. Since then, both Departments under our committee's jurisdiction have taken steps to help meet that directive.

Mr. McNamee, thank you for joining us on behalf of the Department of Energy. I appreciate your Department's efforts to remove institutional barriers that hamper our efforts to achieve a cleaner, cheaper, more diverse, and more secure energy future. I think it's smart to crosscut agency work as we seek to address, whether it's microgrids, or mineral security, exascale computing, quantum, advanced nuclear, energy storage, and other challenges that we face. I think it also makes sense to create public-private partnerships that leverage our national labs, our universities, and our industries.

So I look forward to hearing how this important work can be better facilitated by the structural changes DOE has made to realign certain offices beneath the Under Secretaries. I also look forward to learning more about the integration of DOE's new Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response. We've had several who have come before this committee to talk about this newly established CESER, including the Secretary himself, so hearing your comments this morning will be appreciated

Sharing best practices and breaking down silos at DOE just seems logical. And while I have concerns about several aspects of OMB's recent blueprint to reorganize the federal government, I do appreciate the Secretary's support of highly effective programs such as ARPA-E – I'm a big supporter of that. I wish that the Secretary's support were reflected in the President's budget request. As you know, we're going to continue supporting it through not only this committee here but through Appropriations.

Turning to the Department of the Interior, Ms. Combs, thank you being here today, appreciate the conversation we had just a little over a week ago. In my view, you should have been confirmed as Assistant Secretary some months ago. But you're waiting and waiting and waiting,

and while you have been waiting I know you have been working with the Secretary to develop, as he puts it, a Department that will work for the American people for the next 100 years.

I often say in this committee and out in public, that the Department of the Interior is effectively Alaska's landlord. And with the control that the federal government, specifically the Interior has, over 223 million acres of land in our state, it has a significant impact on our economy. So if the Department is reorganizing in a manner that allows it to improve mission delivery and focus resources in the field, I think that Alaskans can get behind that and ultimately benefit from it.

I do support Interior's goal of aligning geographic areas to enhance coordination of resource and policy decisions, as well as the establishment of common regions that will streamline operations to better serve Americans. I welcome the idea of sending more employees from headquarters to the field, closer to the people and places their decisions affect. I also believe there are a number of agencies within other Departments that would be a better fit at Interior.

This morning we will leave both of you to walk us through all of the proposed changes happening at DOE and DOI, which I think will help us understand the thinking behind them and how they would work in practice. It's one thing to have them down on paper, looks like a good idea, but how does the implementation work. I know that this entails a lot of work, obviously a great deal more to come, Senators have clearly legitimate questions that will relate to this and how these efforts will unfold. I certainly do. But certainly can't deny that it is a worthy endeavor to look at the structures of our departments to determine how operationally they are working.

I think that's our responsibility, looking at the structures of government to determine if they are as efficient and effective as we expect. Putting ideas on the table for improvements is a good thing and something we should encourage. And from there, it's on all of us to consider those ideas, consider them thoughtfully, help refine them if they're good ideas, and then move forward on those that best serve the American people.

Senator Cantwell?

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