

Statement of
Andrew E. Light
Nominee for the Position of Assistant Secretary for International Affairs,
United States Department of Energy
Before the
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
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Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, and distinguished members of the Committee.

I'm truly honored to be part of this hearing and to be nominated.

I want to first thank my wife Juliet, without whom I would not be here today, and my children Miloš and Marika, the two best people I know.

I am the grandson of two West Virginia coal miners: Jack Light and Carmine Pellegrino. They both spent their lives doing grueling, dangerous work, and for far too little compensation. Carmine was paid by the ton of coal he moved by hand, setting a local record that some in Bridgeport, West Virginia still remember.

Both of my grandfathers died when I was young, but my memories of them remain clear; they fill me with pride. My grandparents put all they had into building prosperity and security for their country, their communities, and their families.

I didn't grow up in West Virginia. Years before I was born, my Dad moved south with my mother to Georgia. I grew up in rural towns. I developed an abiding love of the natural world that has shaped my adult life. We went back to West Virginia twice a year to see relatives. The changes I saw in both of those states, both good and bad, drive my desire to see every community flourish.

With my time today, I want to focus on three goals I will bring to the role of Assistant Secretary of Energy for International Affairs, if confirmed, that I believe will improve the lives of all Americans: seizing the opportunity to create good-paying jobs, securing partnerships that will make Americans safer, and winning the technologies of the future.

First, seizing the job opportunity. Like President Biden and Secretary Granholm I believe that climate action is job creation. The clean energy transition in the United States will produce millions of good paying jobs. But this job-creating market opportunity is even greater outside of the U.S. The biggest growth in population, energy access, and creation of new infrastructure will happen where the rest of the world's billions of people live.

The climate commitments of the top 21 developing countries under the 2015 Paris Agreement have opened up an estimated \$23 trillion market opportunity through 2030. And that's just for 21 countries out of over 190 that made commitments under Paris. If we go after this market, the economic opportunity for American workers and companies is staggering. If I am confirmed by this body, I will pursue that opportunity every day. The lion's share of bilateral and multilateral cooperation and engagement by the U.S. can create millions more good paying jobs that will benefit the entire country.

Second, securing partnerships. The global opportunities for job creation embedded in goals like achieving net-zero emission by 2050 will not just come to us. We have to go to them. If we don't, then other countries will take those opportunities. While we have achieved some notable wins, we have also stood by while competitors, especially China, have created massive international energy development programs. If fully realized, China's Belt and Road initiative will dwarf the Marshall Plan. And Belt and Road does not just build energy infrastructure around the world, it builds spheres of influence. Abandoning critical partnerships with the rest of the world not only leaves us out of job creation opportunities, but also makes us less safe and secure.

Finally, winning the technologies of the future. Estimates are that about half of the energy technologies we need to achieve net zero emissions by mid-century either are not commercially viable or not available. Nonetheless, all G7 countries are now committed to this goal, along with an increasing number of emerging economies. Sectors where it is harder to reduce emissions, like steel, cement, and chemicals, will need carbon capture, hydrogen, and other innovations. While the Department of Energy has produced some of the most important clean energy deployment and development initiatives in the world, like the Clean Energy Ministerial and Mission Innovation, we also need to forge targeted partnerships with countries that share our principles on respect for workers, market values, environmental protection, and scientific integrity. We have to compete to become the biggest innovator and manufacturer in hydrogen, carbon capture, and other technologies that will create more jobs while meeting the climate challenge.

Now, some have asked me if it's odd that a grandson of two coal miners is so committed to a clean energy transformation. But I don't have any doubt that my grandparents would approve. Like them, I only want to build prosperity and security for our country, our communities, and our families. Jack Light and Carmine Pellegrino would understand this, and then they would tell me to get to work.

I welcome your questions.