



Opening Statement
Nominations Hearing for Donaldson, Evans, Fall, and Simmons
Chairman Lisa Murkowski
June 26, 2018

Good morning, the committee will come to order.

We're here today to consider four nominees for the Department of Energy:

- Ms. Teri Donaldson to be Inspector General;
- Ms. Karen Evans to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy for Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response;
- Dr. Christopher Fall to be Director of the Office of Science; and
- Mr. Daniel Simmons to be an Assistant Secretary of Energy for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy.

I'm really very pleased to see a full panel before us. The last time we had four nominees at the same hearing was last September, so it's been a while. And I'm just going to say for the record, babies that are making noise are totally welcome, because we need more kids in this room – totally welcome. But seriously, I am very impressed with the depth of experience and qualifications that each of you bring to the table.

Ms. Donaldson, it's been several years since DOE has had a permanent Inspector General—that time is long overdue. The IG is responsible for keeping the Secretary and Congress informed of fraud and other serious problems, rooting out abuses and deficiencies, and recommending corrective actions.

Our committee has great respect for the Office of the Inspector General and the people who work within it at DOE. We expect the individual who leads it to maintain his or her independence from the rest of the Department. And because this is essentially a lifetime appointment, the bar is pretty high here.

Ms. Evans, the position you are nominated for is new, but one of great responsibility and importance. Members of the committee have had an opportunity to be read in to this particular office. And again, the value that it brings to the conversation is so important. You are going to be paving the way for the brand new office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security, and Emergency Response, or CESER. You will be focused on the security of our energy infrastructure—which Secretary Perry has stated is one of his highest priorities.

As everyone here recognizes, the energy sector is a high-value target for cyber-attacks. Our committee has spent many hours examining these threats, and we've heard that protection of our nation's critical assets is a shared responsibility that requires federal, state, and private sector partners to all be working together.

If you are confirmed, we will be relying on you to help lead those efforts. We will also rely on you to help us answer some of the most fundamental questions in this space: what is next? What should the federal government do (or refrain from doing) to meet dynamic and evolving threats? And, how can we improve the cyber resiliency of critical energy infrastructure if a threat becomes a reality?

Protecting our nation's energy infrastructure is critical to maintaining so much of the American way of life. We recognize that this is no small task, so Ms. Evans, I welcome your willingness to take it on.

Finally, Dr. Fall and Mr. Simmons, you have both spent time in my home state, attending Alaska National Lab Day. We thank you for that. It was a great opportunity, I think, to rub elbows with some of the best, some of the brightest scientists, and also for working to build strong partnerships with UAF and others across our state.

I view your presence at Alaska National Lab Day as a demonstration of your commitment to energy innovation. And again, similar to cybersecurity, I cannot understate the importance of that mission. Finding, nurturing, and bringing down the cost of new technologies is critically important to keeping energy affordable, providing for the strength of our economy, as well as addressing efforts to deal with climate change.

I do have to say, that while I was pleased to have both of you in Alaska, I really hope Ms. Donaldson or Ms. Evans, that in your official capacity you don't come to visit us Alaska.

But very seriously – given the positions you will hold, and the work we lies ahead really for all of you, I suspect none of you will be strangers to this committee. I appreciate your willingness to serve and your commitment to work with us. I think we know that the dynamics on the floor right now aren't particularly favorable for moving nominees, but know that I intent to seek to move your nominations as quickly as possible, so that Secretary Perry can have the team that he needs in place as soon as possible. So, I thank you for that.

I now turn to Senator Cantwell for her remarks this morning.

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