



**Opening Statement: Nominations Hearing  
Burman, Combs, Dabbar, Domenech, Jonas, and Menezes  
Chairman Lisa Murkowski  
July 20, 2017**

Good morning, the Committee will come to order, welcome.

We are here this morning to consider six nominations, three from the Department of the Interior and three from the Department of Energy.

Our Interior nominees are Brenda Burman to be Commissioner of Reclamation; Susan Combs to be Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget; and Doug Domenech to be Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs.

Our Energy nominees are Paul Dabbar to be Under Secretary for Science; David Jonas to be General Counsel; and Mark Menezes to be Under Secretary.

I would like to welcome all six nominees to our committee and thank them for their willingness to serve our country. To begin this morning, we will hear introductions from several colleagues, beginning first with Senator Cornyn, then Congresswoman Radewagen, Senator Flake, and Senator Cassidy. I also wish to provide introductions and speak to a few of our nominees' qualifications. So at this point in time, before moving to our opening statements, I would like you to begin, Senator Cornyn, with the introduction that you wish to make before the committee this morning. Welcome to you.

Thank you Senator Flake, I appreciate all of those introductions. I would now ask the nominees can now take their seats at the table. I will make a brief statement and Senator Cantwell will make hers. We will then swear in each of you and hear your testimony, including the introductions of your family members, if you have any that are with you today.

The first thing I would like to say is that I am glad you are here and I appreciate that we are at a nomination hearing with six nominees sitting at our witness table. This process has been a little slower than most of us anticipated, from the receipt of nominations to the delays that we are seeing just in confirmations. Given that we have a total of 38 nominees to process through our committee alone, and have only confirmed two and reported just four others so far -this is a good sign to have a full table this morning. Having a full panel here today is an important step as we

seek to ensure that Secretary Zinke and Secretary Perry have the members of their leadership teams in place and as soon as possible.

Secretary Zinke has already proven to be an ambitious leader of the Department of the Interior. I had an opportunity to travel with him, along with several other colleagues who are here, to the Arctic, Norway and Greenland, and then flew across to the top of the United States, to Alaska. He made a very strong impression on many Alaskans while he was there.

Ms. Burman, Ms. Combs, and Mr. Domenech, I appreciate your willingness to join Secretary Zinke at the Department of the Interior. Should you be confirmed, you will be responsible for identifying the challenges and the opportunities that exist for our federal lands, water management, and territories. Ms. Burman, I also want to note that should you be confirmed, you will be the first female commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation.

I have not yet been able to host Secretary Perry in Alaska, but I look forward to doing so and working with him to continue the Department of Energy's pursuit of scientific breakthroughs, transformative technologies, and energy dominance. Mr. Dabbar, Mr. Jonas, and Mr. Menezes, I also appreciate your willingness to serve. And I look forward to hearing more about what you would do, should you be confirmed, to help increase access to energy, make it more affordable, and improve its environmental performance.

For members who have questions for our nominees, know that we are going to be trying to work through as many questions as possible; there is an Appropriations markup taking place in fifteen minutes so I will be jumping to and from that, but if members have additional questions after our hearing concludes, any questions for the record will be due at the close of business today. With our August session extended by two weeks, I also want members to be aware that it is my intention to move these nominees as quickly as we can, should they prove qualified and have sufficient support in the Committee - hopefully to give them a chance of being confirmed before we leave in August.

Finally, I have a large number of letters of support for these nominees, Senator Flake had mentioned some that he had provided for Ms. Burman but I would ask unanimous consent that they be made part of the hearing record.

With that, I will now turn to Senator Cantwell for her opening remarks, and then we will swear in our nominees.

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