



Opening Statement
Hearing on the Nominations of Burnison and White
Chairman Lisa Murkowski
January 18, 2018

Good morning, the Committee will come to order.

We were able to welcome a day before yesterday our newest member to the committee, Senator Smith from Minnesota who's joined us; and I mentioned at that time that Senator Capito would be returning to the committee, so it's good to have you back with us working on energy issues, so welcome back.

We are here today to consider two nominations for the Department of Energy, Anne White to be the Assistant Secretary of Energy for Environmental Management and Melissa Burnison to be the Assistant Secretary of Energy for Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs.

Ms. White, the position that you have been nominated for is one of tremendous importance to many members of this committee, and to our nation as a whole. The Office of Environmental Management is responsible for the cleanup of the legacy waste from our nation's nuclear weapons research and development program. The work being done at the remaining 16 sites is often uniquely site-specific and requires a high amount of training and expertise to be conducted safely.

As Assistant Secretary, it will be your job to ensure that this work is undertaken in accordance with applicable safety requirements. At the same time, you will be responsible for ensuring the effective use of taxpayer dollars on these projects by encouraging contractors to stay on schedule and within cost. And we recognize that this is no small challenge, given that EM is perennially on the Government Accountability Office's "high risk" list, so I look forward to hearing more from you on how you plan to correct some of the office's long-standing deficiencies.

Ms. Burnison, ordinarily we wouldn't even be conducting a hearing for your nomination the Assistant Secretary for the Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs a privileged nomination that, absent member objection,

goes straight on the executive calendar for floor consideration, after a ten-day waiting and review period

And while we did receive an objection for your nomination, I would note here that it was unrelated to you or your qualifications for this role. I preferred to avoid this extra step and detour, but that unfortunately was not possible in what has been kind of a tough environment here in the Senate to confirm even the least controversial and most well-qualified nominees.

So I thank you both for your willingness to serve your country. Given the positions you will hold, I don't think either of you will be strangers to the members of this committee. So I ask for your commitment to work with us, once you are confirmed, and will now turn to Senator Cantwell for her opening remarks.

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