

Dr. Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall
Opening Statement
Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee
July 24, 2014

Chair Landrieu, Ranking Member Murkowski, members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you as the President's nominee to be Deputy Secretary of Energy. I am honored to be here and want to express my appreciation to many members of the Committee for the time you have taken to meet with me over the past few weeks.

I would like to begin by thanking President Obama for nominating me to serve in this significant position in a Department whose mission is crucial to a strong economy and to our national security. I appreciate the confidence that Secretary Moniz and Deputy Secretary Poneman have shown in me. I am grateful for the introductions by Senator Dianne Feinstein and General Brent Scowcroft, from whom I have learned so much over the years and to whom I continue to turn for wise counsel. They have set the gold standard in their decades-long service to our Nation.

It is a pleasure to introduce to you the members of my family, most of whom have travelled here from California for this hearing: my mother, Dorothy Sherwood, my husband, Jeffrey Randall, our two sons, Richard and William, my brother, Ben Sherwood, and my young nephew, Will. Today would have been my late father Richard's 86th birthday and he would have relished this moment. My family has made what I do possible – and I am indebted to them for generously supporting me and for their enduring love. I particularly want to thank Jeff for being “all in” since 2009, as he has commuted from his busy Bay Area neurosurgery practice to enable me to serve in government – and, should I be confirmed, he will be signing up for more overnight flights to Washington.

I have been dedicated to public service for most of my life, having been guided by parents whose values and actions reflected deep patriotism. They raised us to honor all that America makes possible by giving back all that we can – to family, community, and country. They relentlessly emphasized education as the door to opportunity, and urged us to use the opportunities we earned to make a difference. They taught us that public service is a high calling to which we should aspire.

My first opportunity to serve was as a high school intern in the Senate in the summer of 1976, when I worked as a legislative correspondent. After finishing my education, I went to work for Senator Joe Biden, and learned firsthand about the important work of the committees and the Senators who serve on them.

I have been privileged to serve the national interest across the decades in the executive and legislative branches, at universities, and in think tanks. My commitment and focus in each of those roles has been to making America strong and safe by improving our defense capabilities, building vibrant and durable alliances that are force multipliers for our power, and preventing the emergence of new threats that would hold at risk the freedoms and security that we cherish most.

Over the past five and a half years, I have had the opportunity to help lead the Obama Administration's efforts on a wide range of complex challenges facing our Nation. Many have involved missions connected to the Department of Energy portfolio, including:

- Ensuring the safety, security, and effectiveness of our nuclear arsenal and the vitality of the national laboratories and production facilities that support that effort;
- Developing and implementing innovative strategies to counter the dangers associated with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction materials and capabilities – and the continuing desire of terrorist groups to seek access to them; and
- Supervising the fulfillment of the unprecedented agreement to get 1,300 tons of chemical weapons out of Syria.

Along with our uniquely capable military, our energy resources will be an essential source of our strength in the 21st century – especially given the changing global energy landscape. The revolution in American oil and natural gas production is helping fuel our economic growth and enhance our energy security. At the same time, energy innovation drives our competitiveness and positions us to continue to lead the world.

If approved by this Committee and confirmed by the Senate, I commit to working closely with Congress to advance the key lines of effort that reflect the priorities previously described to you by Secretary Moniz.

Specifically, I will:

- Advance the “all of the above” strategy for America’s energy future, including the President’s Climate Action Plan;
- Champion our international energy leadership, including support to allies and partners;
- Manage the U.S. nuclear enterprise to ensure that it remains safe and secure, continues to deliver effective deterrence, and counters proliferation and nuclear terrorism;
- Work with our National Labs, universities, and the private sector to support key generators of scientific and technological innovation and offer cutting edge solutions for the American people;
- Strengthen the Energy Department’s program and project management across the enterprise to deliver results and value for the American taxpayer.

These are tough challenges, and solutions will be neither easy nor quick. They will take time and ingenuity as well as forceful leadership and management. In most cases, they will require our steady attention beyond this Administration. That is why if confirmed I would seek to build bipartisan approaches that put us on a sustainable path toward meeting these critical goals.

Earlier in my career, I lived in New Mexico, and often reflected on the courage and dedication of the brilliant scientists who came together at Los Alamos in the dark days of the Second World War, harnessing the power of the atom to counter the gravest danger to democracy and freedom. They met the challenge of their times, and today so must we.

Inspired by their example, I hold fast to the wisdom of former Secretary of Defense Bill Perry, who says that the hardest problems are the ones that are most worth working on. If confirmed, I commit to giving these exceedingly hard problems my all, and to doing everything we can to deliver the strong economy and safe future that our children and grandchildren deserve.

Again, thank you for your consideration of my nomination. I look forward to answering your questions.