

Statement of Richard Howorth
Nominee to the Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works
May 25, 2011

Good afternoon, Chairman Boxer, Ranking Member Inhofe, and distinguished members of the Committee. I am honored to have been nominated by President Obama to serve on the board of directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority. I am also very grateful to Senator Cochran and Senator Wicker for their support, and appear before you humbly today.

As one who has had a lifelong interest, and stake, in the progress of the region where I am from -- Mississippi in particular -- I must say that the TVA, as you know, has been and remains a vitally important entity. It has a great track record of providing low-cost, efficient, and reliable power to the many municipal and co-op power associations that serve as its distributors, and it has brought great benefits to rate payers and economic development in our area. A recent example is the Blue Springs auto manufacturing site, 40 miles from my home in Oxford, where Toyota is reportedly on track to begin producing its fuel-efficient Corolla model this fall, creating 2,000 new jobs in Mississippi. A key attraction to the site was the presence of the TVA.

As mayor of Oxford, whose Oxford Electric Department is a municipal enterprise, I served as chairman of the authority that oversaw the Department, and thus am familiar with the TVA as a municipal customer. As a member of the board of directors of the North Mississippi Industrial Development Association, I also had some contact with the TVA's economic development initiatives and staff, whom I found to be highly effective.

I believe that both my for-profit and public service experiences can contribute to the board's strength. I started my own business thirty-two years ago with \$10,000 that my wife and I had saved, combined with a \$10,000 loan which I secured only after three attempts to persuade the banker that my proposal was solid. The business grew well over time, eventually reaching a point where I could delegate management in order for me to have the time to lead a national trade association and later serve as mayor of Oxford, a full-time position.

The experience of wearing three different leadership hats has taught me, for instance, the necessity of strong communication with customers, stakeholders, or constituents; the proper distance a board member takes to a chief executive and staff; the importance of trust and respect among fellow board members and, indeed, within an entire organization; and the tremendous responsibilities and obligations a governmental authority has to the general public.

I am a big believer in planning, a key component of my mayoral administration and my trade association experience, as well. Leadership in the trade association involved

undergoing major industry and legal transitions which would have proved disastrous without extensive strategic planning, an initiative that I chaired. With the City of Oxford, we created the city's first major comprehensive plan in 30 years, which paved the way for robust annexation, historic preservation, major infrastructure expansion, public transit, and the city's first sustainability committee. Oxford Electric Department also required attention, enhancing technical staff and bringing in a new superintendent who made both the field and the clerical sides of the Department operate more efficiently.

Those who know me at home I hope would tell you that I have a strong work ethic. If confirmed as a board director of the TVA, I will be engaged in and committed to its ambition to be a leader in industry—for safety, technological innovation, low-cost, reliable energy, and environmental stewardship. As we face rising demand for energy against the backdrop of increasingly extreme challenges that exist in generating power, I am particularly eager in working to make the TVA, being the unique public entity that it is, a national leader in conservation.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to your questions.