

**Statement of J.R. "Skip" Thompson, III**  
**Nominee to the Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors**  
**U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works**  
**November 28, 2017**

Good afternoon, Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse, and distinguished members of the Committee. I am honored to have been nominated to serve on the Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors. I also very much appreciate the support of Senator Shelby and Senator Strange of my home state of Alabama.

My relationship to the Tennessee River is probably fairly unique among potential board members. As a young person growing up in north Alabama, I spent countless hours on the Tennessee River, waterskiing with friends. As a father, some of my most cherished memories are of time spent on the river with my family, particularly time spent fishing with my two sons as they grew up. Today, as a grandfather, I'm now blessed to be able to introduce my grandchildren to the unique beauty of the Tennessee River and the recreational opportunities that it affords. For this, TVA's focus on environmental stewardship and flood control deserves much of the credit.

My parents moved our family to the Tennessee Valley in 1963, when I was four(4) years old; my father was fresh out of the Navy and had taken a job with NASA at Marshall Space Flight Center in Huntsville. As a result, I've lived and worked almost my entire life within a couple of miles of the Tennessee River. It defines our region of the country, and TVA's influence on the economy and quality of life in its service area cannot be overstated.

For the past six(6) years, I've had the privilege of serving on the Board of Directors of Decatur Utilities, which is TVA's second largest distributor partner in Alabama, which is TVA's second largest state. Decatur Utilities serves the power needs of roughly 30,000 customers. In this role as a board member, I have developed a new appreciation for TVA and its unique relationship with its distributors. I've also developed a new appreciation for the importance of reliable, competitively priced power to the residents and businesses of our region. As our electricity provider, TVA has been an exemplary partner in the economic development efforts of our region of Alabama.

The business that I currently run is a nice example. Our company provides credit and financial services for small trucking companies, body shops, and truck and auto dealers. Our customers are spread out across the country. Any disruption in our electricity has the potential to cut off funding for our customers and significantly disrupt their operations.

Thanks in part to having TVA as our generator of power, our company has a predictable and reliable source of electricity and an attractive region of the country to which we can attract employees. As a result, today we have grown to employ 68 people vs 38 when we

purchased the company in 2009. TVA is a friend to small business just as much as it is to large industrial customers.

My primary role on the Decatur Utilities board has revolved around my financial training and background. I envision using this skill set on the TVA board, if confirmed. I have extensive experience with and appreciation for budgets, proper debt structure, and financial discipline and soundness. Given its unique ownership and structure, I believe these considerations are paramount in the proper management of TVA as it carries out its mission.

One final point I'd like to make is my firm belief in the importance of competent board members playing their role in setting the mission of an organization, then empowering competent management to execute on that mission. In my career, I have been on both sides of that relationship – board member and management. I've seen very talented boards that work well together and have an excellent working relationship with management, and I've also seen boards that either do not have members with the appropriate skill set or do not know the proper role of a board member. Proper board interaction among the members and with the management team is essential for any organization to be successful. If confirmed, I intend to bring this same mindset to the TVA board.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I will be happy to answer any questions.