

Statement of Robert P. Klein
Nominee to the Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors
Before the
United States Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate, and Nuclear Safety

April 6, 2022

Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, Subcommittee Chairman Markey and Ranking Member Inhofe, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to have been nominated by President Biden to serve on the Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors. I also would like to acknowledge and thank Senator Blackburn and Senator Hagerty from my home state of Tennessee for their service to the state and support of TVA and me throughout this confirmation process. Furthermore, I would like to thank this committee for taking the time to consider my nomination.

By way of introduction, I have been a lifelong resident of the Tennessee Valley. I was raised by my mother and grandmother in Chattanooga and was taught from an early age the importance of being respectful, understanding the value of hard work, the significance of being honest and of good character, helping others and to always remain humble and grateful as one moves forward in life.

I have been privileged to have worked at or with the electrical utility industry my entire adult life. Working at the Electric Power Board (EPB) of Chattanooga as a Journeyman Lineman and Line Foreman I gained the knowledge and skill to construct and maintain transmission and distribution power systems, and thus an understanding of the operational side of the industry. As an International Representative and International Vice President of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), I had the opportunity to work with many utilities in the Southeast, including the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA). Having been involved in numerous negotiations and a member of several labor-management committees during my career, I gained the ability to understand the economics and business side of the industry through close working relationships with those serving in management. In all my years of working with TVA, I never lost sight of the fact that for all residents of the valley to prosper, TVA had to be successful. Clean, sustainable, and competitive energy stimulates the economy and grows jobs. I have the experience and knowledge to be an asset to the Tennessee Valley Authority, and most importantly, the mission of the TVA to serve the people of the Tennessee Valley by providing low cost energy, environment stewardship, and economic development.

In 1933 when the TVA was formed, it had a mission to improve the quality of life for the people of the Tennessee Valley. Having seen the success of this mission firsthand by the lives of people I personally know that TVA has touched during my career, I am encouraged with the opportunities of the future and that TVA will continue to fulfill its mission to improve the lives of the more than 10 million individuals in its service area. This shared mission with the understanding of how it can be implemented and be successful provides me with a vision of how TVA moves forward with its strategic plans. I would be honored to have the opportunity to be an integral part of this vision if given the opportunity to serve as a member of the TVA Board of Directors.

In working with and looking at the history of the TVA, it is evident that its leadership and employees have been committed to its mission from the beginning. Having lived in Chattanooga, I have witnessed the impact they have had on my community, not only from the provision of energy resources, but also through river navigation and flood control, recreational activities, economic development opportunities and service to this community through its leadership and shared resources. I believe the strength of the TVA is the people who work there. They have an experienced and talented workforce committed to improving the quality of lives of those they serve.

During my career, I had the opportunity to participate and be a part of joint training and safety programs with TVA. Their four core values of safety, integrity, inclusion, and service were never compromised and to this day reflects their long standing mission and dedication toward their employees. TVA's workforce has been an important and vital component in the success of the agency from the first hydro plant built and, the first construction of their transmission grid to the completion of the most recent nuclear plant to come online in the United States. I am committed to a skilled, trained, and diverse workforce within the agency.

TVA is an important player in the United States electrical system. Its position as a government-owned public utility poises TVA to be a leader in technology and innovation for the nation, allowing the United States and the Southeast, in particular, to contribute to our collective goals of decarbonization. If confirmed on the TVA Board of Directors, I would support TVA's guiding principles to reduce carbon emission and look for projects that could potentially lead the way in further reductions. For example, I am aware of TVA's interest in exploring the building of a small modular nuclear reactor near Oak Ridge, Tennessee. This project represents what could become the nation's next generation of nuclear plants. If confirmed, I would look forward to exploring opportunities such as this.

With my background in the industry, I also know that asset changes in the utility sector impact the men and women that have powered our electricity system and kept our lights on over the years. I am sensitive to this, and if confirmed, as a TVA Board member, I am committed to working with leadership to ensure employees are given ample opportunity to be retrained and/or offered positions elsewhere within the agency.

If given the opportunity to serve on the TVA Board of Directors I am committed to move TVA forward in a path that addresses not only interests I mentioned, but other areas that will help them to fulfill its mission of service to industries, distributors and, economic development and to bring prosperity to all inhabitants of the Tennessee Valley.

I believe my background and experience in the electrical utility industry, specifically public power, has prepared me for the challenge and responsibility of joining the TVA Board. Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, I welcome this opportunity, and I am honored and humbled to be considered to serve on the TVA Board of Directors. I appreciate your consideration of my nomination, and again, thank you for the opportunity to be before you today.