

BUSINESS MEETING

THURSDAY, JUNE 15, 2017

U.S. SENATE

Committee on Environment and Public Works

Washington, D.C.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m. in room 406, Dirksen Senate Building, the Honorable John Barrasso [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Senators Barrasso, Carper, Inhofe, Capito, Boozman, Wicker, Fischer, Rounds, Ernst, Shelby, Moran, Cardin, Booker.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JOHN BARRASSO, A UNITED STATES
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF WYOMING

Senator Barrasso. Good morning. I call this business meeting to order.

I thank everyone for coming today. We are here to consider the nomination of Kristine Svinicki to be reappointed as a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Senator Carper and I will give our opening statements, after that other members may make remarks until we have a reporting quorum. We are very close to that right now. Then we are going to proceed to that one item on the agenda.

As soon as we get the reporting quorum, we will have the vote. Then I will wait and let every other member make a statement, if they would like.

I applaud the President's nomination of Ms. Svinicki. She has served as a member of the NRC for more than nine years, including the last six months as chair. The members of the Environment and Public Works Committee know her well. She has testified before this committee 18 times, three times as a nominee. In every appearance before us as a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, she has proven herself to be a well-qualified, experienced and dedicated public servant.

Twice before, members of this committee and the full Senate have agreed. When Ms. Svinicki was first nominated to be a

member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, this committee reported her by voice vote in 2007. The Senate confirmed her by voice vote as well. She was renominated for a second term, reported by voice vote in 2012, confirmed as well by the Senate.

President Trump has designated Ms. Svinicki as Chair of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission in January 2017. Before joining the NRC, she built a distinguished career in public service, various staff positions in the Senate, as a nuclear engineer at the Department of Energy, and as an energy engineer for the Wisconsin Public Service Commission.

I am going to ask that the remainder of my statement go into the record, because I do think we have a reporting quorum at this time. And I will turn to Senator Carper.

[The prepared statement of Senator Barrasso follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE THOMAS R. CARPER, A UNITED STATES
SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF DELAWARE

Senator Carper. Thanks, Mr. Chairman. I am going to ask unanimous consent that my statement be submitted for the record, and just say a couple things if I could.

I just want to say how proud I am to serve on this committee, and how proud I am to serve with our chairman and each one of you. We have a lot of new members of this committee. I think the new members bring a lot to the committee, and we are happy you are with us.

Former Chairman Inhofe and I had focused a lot of the time that we have been in the Senate on all things nuclear, and continue to. He provided great leadership of the subcommittee for a number of years, along with George Voinovich. I attempted to do that as well. And it is important, it is important work; part of our responsibility to this committee.

We have had some real turbulence in recent years with respect to the NRC. There were times when those folks were before us and I had never seen five more unhappy people in my life. We had these very contentious, difficult hearings. I am sure Jim Inhofe remembers those. Those days are behind us and we seem to have a commission that seems to be working well together, in a collegial and productive way. So that is good.

Kristine has been a member of the Commission for a number

of years. The members obviously know when she worked on the Floor as a member of our staff, and we have a high regard for her. I am pleased that I think we are going to get her confirmed out of the committee. I certainly support doing so.

There are a couple of other nominees that are before us, with her, two other Republicans, so we are considering three, not today, but three Republicans that are sort of like packaged together. And we have two Democrats, one whose term expires next year. I have talked to the chairman about somehow pairing these two additional Republicans that have been nominated by this President, to pair them with one of the Democrats whose term expires next year.

That would give us a situation that, if we could get them all done, I hope we could get them done quickly, that we would have three Republicans and two Democrats to continue to serve on the Commission. So I hope could move in that direction, but today I hope we will report out Kristine Svinicki.

The other thing I want to say, the Democratic ranking members are raising in committee hearings and markups this week our concern about moving forward as a body with respect to health care. I am not going to belabor it, but I do want to say this, if I could.

As some of you know, I start my day in the gym in the morning. I know the Colonel over here and I sometimes run. He

could run me into the ground, he could have this morning. It was brutal out there. I like to run down to the Lincoln Memorial. I don't know if you have had a chance to go down there lately, but engraved up on the walls around President Lincoln's statue are some of his most famous speeches, like the Second Inaugural address is there, the Gettysburg address is there.

Sort of coming on the heels of yesterday a new tragedy was visited on our colleagues in the House. Thank God for the Capitol Police. Everyone I have seen since then has shaken their hands and thanked them. I hope you are doing that as well. I think we all just a wake-up call that life is dear, and not something to take for granted.

The other thing is, for me at least, is a reminder that we need to work together. People want us to work together, not just on this nomination today, not just on health care. They want us to work together.

I am going to try to do a better job of doing that. I think we all could. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Senator Carper follows:]

Senator Barrasso. Thank you very much, Senator Carper. I enjoy working with you and look forward to continuing to work with you in a bipartisan way. I appreciate your help in expediting this nomination today.

We have agreed, the Ranking Member and I have agreed that this will be a voice vote, but members may choose to have the vote recorded on the nomination. So we will have that opportunity in a few seconds.

We do have a quorum. I would like to call up nomination number 561, Kristine Svinicki of Virginia, to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of five years, expiring June 30th, 2022, a reappointment. I move to approve and report the nomination favorably to the Senate. Is there a second?

Senator Carper. I second.

Senator Barrasso. All in favor, please say aye.

[Chorus of ayes.]

Senator Barrasso. All opposed, no?

[No audible response.]

Senator Barrasso. In the opinion of the Chair, the ayes have it. We have approved the nomination of Ms. Svinicki to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, which will be reported to the full Senate for approval.

The voting part of our business meeting is finished, but I

am happy to recognize any member who wishes to make a statement on the nomination that we have just approved.

Senator Inhofe?

Senator Inhofe. You are going to see an exodus here of the Senate Armed Services Committee, which I am going to. But I want to echo your words, both of you, in praise for Ms. Svinicki. She has been excellent. I made that expression at our last meeting, and I am very glad to have her back.

Senator Barrasso. Would anyone else like to make a statement?

Hearing none, the business meeting is concluded and adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:10 a.m., the business meeting was concluded.]