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Committee on Environment
and Public Works

Washington, D.C.

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BUSINESS MEETING TO CONSIDER THE NOMINATION DOUGLAS WEAVER TO BE A MEMBER OF THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

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The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m. in room 562, Dirksen Senate Office Building, the Honorable Shelley Moore Capito [chairman of the committee] presiding.

Present: Senators Capito, Whitehouse, Cramer, Lummis, Curtis, Graham, Sullivan, Ricketts, Wicker, Boozman, Husted, Merkley, Padilla.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, A UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA

Senator Capito. I hope everybody is doing well.

I note the presence of a quorum and will now call this business meeting to order.

For the information of the members of the committee, Ranking Member Whitehouse and I will deliver our opening statements, and once we have sufficient attendance of Senators, we will immediately proceed to vote and report the nomination.

After the vote, members who wish to be recognized to speak on the nomination may do so.

I want to thank my colleagues today for attending today's business to vote on the nomination of Doug Weaver to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. I will support Mr. Weaver's nomination this morning, happy to do so.

As our Nation's independent nuclear safety regulator, the NRC is vitally important to our energy future. However, Congress has directed the NRC to be more efficient. We expect the NRC under the leadership and direction of the chairman and the Commission to accelerate their work.

I will continue to work in a bipartisan manner to hold the entire Commission accountable for expediting their efforts, while always prioritizing nuclear safety.

The Commission's authority and credibility provide

confidence that our much-needed rapid nuclear expansion will be accomplished. With almost 40 years of experience in the nuclear industry, beginning in the nuclear navy, then at the NRC, and finally in private industry, Mr. Weaver is well-qualified and well-prepared to support the NRC's important work as a commissioner.

Upon confirmation, Mr. Weaver will immediately be faced with a significant amount of work as the Commission considers staff proposals to make substantial revisions to our nuclear safety rules. In doing so, we must carefully consider those rules to ensure that the agency's regulatory streamlining efforts are properly executed to produce clear, workable and enduring nuclear safety regulations.

I believe that Mr. Weaver recognizes the crucial importance of effectively implementing the ADVANCE Act, President Trump's agenda and continuing to prioritize ongoing licensing activities. As he fulfills his responsibilities as commissioner, I expect he will work closely with this committee, as he said he would, to ensure our shared priorities continue to be aligned.

With respect to the nomination of Lee Beaman to serve on the Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors, we will consider that nomination at another time.

With that, I turn to the Ranking Member for his opening

statement.

[The prepared statement of Senator Capito follows:]

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE SHELDON WHITEHOUSE, A UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Senator Whitehouse. Thank you very much, Chairman.

With respect to Mr. Weaver, at his nomination hearing last week he committed to be a strong protector of public health and safety, even if it were to cost him his job. He said that the NRC needs to make its operations more efficient and told the committee that "Speed cannot come at the cost of compromising safety." He rightly calls NRC's independence non-negotiable.

But then something weird happened. In response to our questions for the record, Mr. Weaver provided one set of responses, and less than five hours later, we got a different set of QFR responses.

In all my time in the Senate, I have never seen that happen before, where the nominee puts in responses to the QFR and then in hours, they are rewritten and refiled. Our information is that they were rewritten and refiled by the White House, which is not a great example if the case you are trying to make is that you are prepared to be independent as an NRC commissioner, and not permit the loot from a well-funded applicant to the White House for political support to the NRC for a fast-lane through the safety regs and then into the market.

So I am pretty upset that that took place, and ask to have a, we have done a redline of the before and after of those

amendments. I would like to have that be made an exhibit appended to my remarks.

Senator Capito. Without objection.

Senator Whitehouse. I agree with the Chairman that Mr. Weaver is qualified, and I think that the urgency of the NRC defending itself is really important. While this episode I find disconcerting, at this point, at least in committee, I will still support Mr. Weaver's nomination.

But I have to point out that his job only gets harder when he gets over to the NRC. Because the chaos there has only gotten worse, largely outside of public view, primarily orchestrated by DOGE detailees from the Department of Energy and the White House, who have been planted at senior levels of the agency.

Why the nuclear industry would want its fate in the hands of fossil fuel people when they are rivals, and we have seen what the fossil fuel industry will try to do to wind and solar, it is a bit of a mystery to me. So we are watching carefully the EO 14300 procedure being led by an acting general counsel who is an oil and gas lawyer with no nuclear experience.

I hope that Weaver and Commissioner Nieh will stick to their guns and spare us the DOE power grabs. It actually matters that the Department of Energy not intrude into the NRC, because the whole reason we set up an NRC was to create that

firewall.

So we all know that executive agencies love turf, and they love to aggrandize themselves. But that is something that we should as a group defend against, in this case, between the DOE and the NRC.

Given that the vote on Mr. Beaman has been postponed, I will summarize more briefly that he is not just unqualified, but he is unfit. There is an ongoing investigation into his role in false statements made about campaign contributions, where loans were mischaracterized as donations at a time when he was the treasurer.

And there is just a cloud of confusion about, was he the treasurer or was he not the treasurer? Did he know about this or did he not know about this? And his QFR answers only muddied the waters further.

In the meantime, this has been referred to the House Ethics Committee, so why would we want to vote on somebody who is at the heart of an ongoing House Ethics Committee investigation, I can't understand.

There are also questions about his status as landlord to multiple House members, including at one point the Speaker, and whether they were charged market rates or not. He disclosed in his QFRs that he rents his house for a dollar a year to the pastor, who was sitting behind him, and that the pastor then

collects the rent from the House members who are there.

That also is a huge bowl of mud and impossible to understand at this point. I think it would serve the committee well to understand that and get good answers before we go on.

And I just have to say that his relationship with Pastor Berger concerns me. Pastor Berber has stated about gay people that he would, and I am quoting him here, "beat every one of them with a baseball bat and not feel bad about it." This is a guy who he had a very close relationship with, who is allegedly the intermediary in his house, for his tenants, who presided over his marriage, who has been his long-time friend who sat behind him in the committee.

And when he pretends to have no knowledge about this guy's truly hateful views, I find that hard to reconcile with common sense.

So I will just leave it at that. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

[The prepared statement of Senator Whitehouse and the referenced information follows:]

Senator Capito. Thank you

Before we move to the business of the committee, we have a very important business item that we must all address, and that is to wish our colleague, Senator Boozman, a happy birthday today.

[Applause.]

Senator Capito. We are glad you are here, and upright -- no, just kidding. I hope you have a great day.

Senator Boozman. Glad to be seen and not viewed.

[Laughter.]

Senator Capito. Okay. At this time, I will ask Senators to hold their remarks on the nominee until after the roll call vote.

So I note the presence of a quorum. I will now call up Presidential Nomination No. 654-2, Douglas Weaver of Maryland to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the remainder of the term expiring on June 30, 2026.

I move to approve and report the nomination favorably. Is there a second?

Senator Whitehouse. Second.

Senator Capito. The Clerk will call the roll.

The Clerk. Ms. Alsobrooks?

Senator Whitehouse. No, by proxy.

The Clerk. Ms. Blunt Rochester?

Senator Whitehouse. No, by proxy.

The Clerk. Mr. Boozman?

Senator Boozman. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Cramer?

Senator Cramer. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Curtis?

Senator Curtis. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Graham?

Senator Graham. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Husted?

Senator Husted. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Kelly?

Senator Whitehouse. Aye, by proxy.

The Clerk. Ms. Lummis?

Senator Lummis. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Markey?

Senator Whitehouse. No, by proxy.

The Clerk. Mr. Merkley?

Senator Merkley. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Padilla?

Senator Padilla. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Ricketts?

Senator Ricketts. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Sanders?

Senator Whitehouse. No, by proxy.

The Clerk. Mr. Schiff?

Senator Whitehouse. Aye, by proxy.

The Clerk. Mr. Sullivan?

Senator Sullivan. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Whitehouse?

Senator Whitehouse. Aye.

The Clerk. Mr. Wicker?

Senator Wicker. Aye.

The Clerk. Madam Chairman?

Senator Capito. Aye.

The Clerk will report the yeas and nays.

The Clerk. Madam Chairman, the yeas are 15, and the nays are 4.

Senator Capito. With that, the nominee is favorably reported. Thank you again to all of our members for being here this morning.

I will now wish to recognize any members who wish to speak.

With that, the business meeting is adjourned, and thank you all very much.

[Whereupon, at 10:15 a.m., the business meeting was adjourned.]