Ranking Member Whitehouse's full remarks, as delivered:

We are here today to entertain nominations for top posts at the Federal Highway Administration, the Army Corps of Engineers, and the EPA office that administers the Brownfields and Superfund programs. Those responsibilities are particularly relevant to three major pieces of Committee legislation that I hope we can pass this congress—WRDA reauthorization, surface transportation reauthorization, and comprehensive permitting reform.

I believe Chair Capito and I can continue the good bipartisan work this committee is known for in areas for which these three nominees will have direct executive responsibility.

But here is the rub. None of these bipartisan bills will matter if Congress' Article I authorization and appropriation power is not respected. And this Administration has repeatedly, unlawfully disrespected congressionally authorized and appropriated spending.

I am happy to see that DOT appears to be making progress obligating money to previously awarded discretionary grants, and I thank the Chair for her diligent pursuit of that progress as well.

However, the National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure program remains paused and stuck in limbo. At the Army Corps, erratic, inconsistent and opaque administration of its Clean Water Act permitting program creates uncertainty for the regulated community at large and for renewable energy project developers in particular, undermining core principles of fairness and neutrality in the Corps' permitting program. I've called to restore integrity and transparency to the Corps' permitting program, and to evaluate each permit action on its own merits in accordance with law and regulation with no response.

And EPA, where even to begin. Administrator Zeldin continues his assault on clean air and clean water despite his promises to us in this committee to protect air and water.

His list of congressionally authorized and appropriated funding that EPA insists on continuing to hold hostage is too long to list here today. Obviously, the biggest target is the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, where Administrator Zeldin and his enablers at DOJ continue to set themselves up for legal and professional liability in the way they conduct their assault on the program.

I've told my team to start work on commonsense bipartisan legislation in all three areas. But the gateway to success to ultimately passing those bills is confidence that this Administration will faithfully execute the laws we pass and clear the projects we have already approved, appropriated, and obligated. It won't work in permitting reform, for instance, to exclude wind and solar from the very definition of the word "energy," violating not just the law, but the dictionary.

I should add in closing that we are also now faced with an effort to use the Congressional Review Act to disapprove three Clean Air Act waivers granted by EPA to the state of California that have existed for many years, even though the Parliamentarian has already ruled that these waivers are not rules as required for the CRA.

A decision to overrule her on this matter—to deploy the nuclear option—will have real consequences. The misuse of the CRA to undo long-ago past policies—adding to the nuclear option of overruling the Parliamentarian—opens up an immense can of worms, and the Senate floor will not be the same if this is where we go.

Overruling the Parliamentarian is tantamount to eliminating the filibuster, said Leader Thune, himself, in January.

There are many avenues for the minority to respond to such a disruption of Senate tradition. Simply count how often the presiding officer says "without objection" on any given day to understand what the response could be to such a disruption. If this is the path Republicans want to go down, go down it at least with eyes wide open.

And also, on the merits, know that climate change is not a hoax, that its damage has already begun in homeowners' insurance markets around the country, that the insurance-to-mortgage-to-property-values collapse can't be stopped by rhetoric, and that the sand is fast running through the hourglass to head off that economic calamity.