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Chairman Capito Opening Statement at Hearing to Consider Turner, Wright Nominations

Below is the opening statement of Chairman Shelley Moore Capito (R-W.Va.) as delivered.

"Today we will receive testimony from David Wright, who is nominated to serve another five-year term as a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and Usha-Maria Turner, the nominee to serve as the Environmental Protection Agency's Assistant Administrator for the Office of International and Tribal Affairs.

"Our consideration of Chairman Wright's renomination comes at a crucial time. China is executing a rapid buildout of its nuclear industry and is projected to overtake the United States as the global leader of nuclear electricity generation.

"The demand for clean, baseload power is skyrocketing as we position America to win the AI race, and global events continue to highlight the grave importance of energy security.

"The importance of those policy concerns has led to the broad bipartisan agreement that we need more nuclear, and that we need to accomplish that goal safely and quickly. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is integral to achieving that goal.

"A half century ago, Congress separated the dual and conflicting responsibilities to both promote and regulate the use of nuclear energy from the Atomic Energy Commission. In doing so, Congress established the Department of Energy's predecessor agency and created the NRC to regulate the civilian use of nuclear technology.

"The principle of separate organizations that promote and regulate nuclear power is as important today as it was fifty years ago, and Congress has continued to reinforce the value of an efficient and competent nuclear regulator. That's why, last Congress I, alongside Senator Whitehouse and a strong bipartisan coalition, led the effort to get the Accelerating Deployment of Versatile Advanced Nuclear for Clean Energy, or better known as the ADVANCE Act, signed into law.

"As the designated head of the NRC, the Chairman is instrumental in leading the agency's ambitious implementation of the law. The Chairman is responsible for selecting key senior agency leadership with the approval of the Commission.

"Through the Executive Director of Operations, the Chairman oversees the NRC's day to day operations and can direct its staff to undertake important initiatives. The Chairman also participates in international forums, to represent the NRC's premier role as the global leader in nuclear energy regulation. Now, the NRC has been thrust further into the center of the national energy conversation.

"Recently, President Trump signed a series of Executive Orders intended to expedite the rapid deployment of more nuclear power. Those Executive Orders are aligned with the ADVANCE Act, but must be carefully implemented to create durable, predictable policies for nuclear licensing. A rapid and disruptive change to the nuclear regulatory framework would be counterproductive and potentially impact financial investment.

"The Chairman and the Commission must prioritize NRC's actions, being mindful of the need for regulatory stability, as expeditiously and efficiently as possible while keeping nuclear safety central to the agency's mission.

"That's why experienced leadership at the Commission is crucial to achieve these objectives. Chairman Wright has served as a member of the Commission since 2018, and President Trump designated him Chairman in January.

"His experiences provide the necessary background and understanding to navigate the extremely important and challenging task of simultaneously implementing the ADVANCE Act, and the Executive Orders, while ensuring fundamental licensing activities are not overlooked. I look forward to understanding how Chairman Wright will navigate these important priorities.

"Today, we will also hear from Usha-Maria Turner, President Trump's nominee to serve as the EPA Assistant Administrator for the Office of International and Tribal Affairs. If confirmed, Mrs. Turner will lead EPA's efforts to maintain our international environmental agreements and partnerships in coordination with the Department of State.

"Mrs. Turner will also oversee EPA's engagements with Tribal governments in implementing our nation's environmental laws and helping our Tribal governments administer their own environmental programs. Effectively supporting the President's foreign policy efforts and coordinating with Tribal governments are vital issues that will help the EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment.

"I look forward to discussing the various aspects of this role with Mrs. Turner."

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