

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

"At this hearing, we will consider the President's nominations of Katherine Scarlett to serve as Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality and Jeffrey Hall to serve as Assistant Administrator for the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance at the Environmental Protection Agency. So, thank you both for your willingness to serve. I want to give a special welcome to Katherine's family…her husband Brian and her parents are here today, so thank you for joining us. And I know Jeffery has his parents and his wife here with him today, so thank you all for coming and being supportive.

"Established by the National Environmental Policy Act, also known as NEPA, the Council on Environmental Quality or CEQ as we call it, is part of the Executive Office of the President. The agency is primarily responsible for advising federal agencies on the implementation of NEPA, as well as developing and recommending environmental policies to the President.

"Katherine is very well-qualified to lead CEQ. In her current role as CEQ's chief of staff, Katherine has supported the efforts of federal agencies to implement the bipartisan Fiscal Responsibility Act and ensure compliance with recent court decisions as agencies update their individual NEPA regulations and procedures.

"She also led efforts to modernize environmental review and permitting processes through President Trump's Permitting Technology Action Plan, recently launching the 'CE Explorer' which allows for easy identification of the more than 2,000 categorical exclusions established by federal agencies.

"During the time of the first Trump Administration, Katherine served in senior roles at CEQ and also at the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council. In the four years between her service in the executive branch, Katherine served on my staff here at EPW, playing a key role in shaping bipartisan provisions in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Economic Development Reauthorization Act, and the America's Conservation Enhancement Reauthorization Act, so thank you for that.

"As my colleagues know, Ranking Member Whitehouse and I are diligently working on bipartisan legislation to reform the environmental review and permitting processes for all projects. I am hopeful that we can get a bill to the President's desk for his signature. And when we do, I am confident that it will be implemented faithfully under Katherine's leadership of CEQ.

"Today, we will also hear from Jeffrey Hall, thank you Jeffery for being here, President Trump's nominee to lead the EPA's Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance. OECA works with EPA regional offices, in partnership with state governments, tribal governments, and other federal agencies to promote regulatory compliance and enforce the nation's environmental laws and regulations.

"The office targets the most serious water, air, and chemical pollution violations under laws such as the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, CERCLA, and the Toxic Substances Control Act. In carrying out the EPA's statutory authority, OECA must operate within the confines of our federal environmental laws, not invent novel violations to penalize regulated entities.

"The previous administration placed an outsized emphasis on penalizing regulated entities, rather than working with good faith actors in the regulated community to ensure compliance. Mr. Hall will be tasked with striking the right balance between the agency's efforts to encourage compliance with our environmental laws, and targeting the entities flaunting those laws to ensure Americans have clean air, clean water, and clean land.

"Mr. Hall's professional experience gives him the expertise to effectively lead this office. He has worked as a litigator, prosecutor, and legal advisor representing

federal agencies, corporations, and individuals in a wide variety of litigation and in both civil and criminal enforcement procedures.

"I look forward to hearing how Mr. Hall will navigate the Agency's enforcement and compliance priorities today."

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