

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy & Natural Resources

Nomination Hearing for Jennifer Granholm to be the Secretary of Energy

January 27, 2021

Cantwell: Thank you Mr. Chairman. And I would be remiss if I didn't say something about Senator Murkowski's comments this morning and working with everybody. There's a great article in the Seattle Times this morning about the Smart Grid legislation that we worked on together. And so it's good to know that people are finally seeing the remnants of that legislation that you worked so hard on, and we all worked so hard on, actually become law. And now people in the community realizing how we can take it and move it forward. So hopefully, you'll get a chance to check that article out.

Governor Granholm, congratulations on your nomination. And you've already I can see just from the few questions you've had got a sense of the vast issues of energy policy and challenges facing America. You and I had a chance to talk about Hanford. But I just wanted to reiterate it being one of the largest cleanup projects in the entire world. Hanford is the federal government's second largest obligation after social security and health care. So it is, as I mentioned to you, often that administrations come in and try to do it, cut corners, or do something. Last year, the Trump administration proposed funding at 46% below what DOE said was needed for the Tri-Party agreement compliance.

So I hope that you can commit to putting forth a budget that helps DOE keep its milestones that are laid out as part of a Tri-Party agreement?

Granholm: You have that commitment.

Cantwell: I'm sorry—

Granholm: I said, I'm sorry, I talked over you, pardon me. I said, you have my commitment.

Cantwell: Thank you. Well, a lot of people at home are listening. I just want to make sure they heard that.

Granholm: Yes, I get that.

Cantwell: In addition, I want to give credit to Secretary Brouillette because he and his team did make significant progress on the construction of the facility that Senator Wyden was commenting on. So one of the next challenges will be to meeting what is a 2023 Tri-Party agreement deadline of getting that facility online. I hope that that's something that we can meet. And I hope that you will come to the Tri-Cities as soon as possible to see this facility.

Granholm: I'd very much like to do that.

Cantwell: Thank you. As far as workforce safety, that is a major issue at Hanford. The Hammer facility helps the training and skilling of a workforce to continue to be ready to meet all the challenges at Hanford. I hope you'll commit to supporting that.

Granholm: Yes.

Cantwell: And then I do just in the debate or conversation we've just been having. You know, our national laboratories play a pretty big role in the next generation of energy policy and enabling. One in particular project, the Grid Storage Launch Pad at the Pacific Northwest Laboratory is really important in doing the next level work on commercialization of long duration grid scale storage at 1/10th of the cost of today's lithium ion batteries. So I hope that these projects at our National Laboratory like grid launch will be priorities for you and so will the funding.

Granholm: Absolutely. Very excited about it.

Cantwell: Great. Thank you Madam Chair.