

Senate hearings consider EPA and DOE nominees; President Trump nominates head of CEQ

June 26, 2018

At the end of June, Senate committees held hearings to consider nominees for the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

On June 26, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources [questioned Christopher Fall](#), the nominee for director of DOE's Office of Science, and Daniel Simmons, the nominee for assistant secretary of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy ([EERE](#)). Prior to serving as principal deputy assistant secretary of EERE for over a year, Simmons served as vice president of policy at the Institute for Energy Research, which has previously advocated for the abolishment of EERE. Currently the acting head of DOE's Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E), Fall received bipartisan support during the hearing for his background in science and work at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). Committee Ranking Member Maria Cantwell stated that she is "pleased the president has nominated a scientist to lead the Office of Science."

On June 20, two nominees for senior positions at the EPA [testified](#) before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works. Peter Wright, nominated for assistant administrator of the Office of Land and Emergency Management, has worked at The Dow Chemical Company as the managing counsel for environmental health and safety since 1999, providing legal support for EPA superfund and other remediation sites. If confirmed, Wright would oversee the EPA's hazardous waste disposal and remediation programs, including the Superfund and the Brownfields programs. William McIntosh, nominated for assistant administrator of the Office of International and Tribal Affairs, has worked for the Ford Motor Company managing global and environmental policy for about 20 years, and has also served as deputy director for the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality where he worked with Tribal and state leaders. During the hearing, when asked by multiple senators about their views on climate change, both nominees agreed that the climate is changing, but do not believe that humans are the primary driver.

On June 12, President Donald Trump announced his intent to [nominate](#) Mary Neumayr to be the Chairwoman of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), which oversees the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) across federal agencies. Neumayr is currently the CEQ Chief of Staff and has been the highest-ranking official since President Trump took office. Prior to being CEQ's Chief of Staff, Neumayr held other counsel positions in the Department of Energy, Department of Justice, and the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. Neumayr's nomination comes after [Kathleen White](#) withdrew her nomination from consideration in February of this year. Neumayr's [nomination](#), along with 16 others, was sent to the Senate on June 18.

To track the confirmation process of key geoscience presidential nominations from the Trump Administration, visit AGI's Federal Nominations [page](#).

Sources: American Institute of Physics; Council on Environmental Quality; Department of Energy; E&E News; Environmental Protection Agency; U.S. Senate, Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; U.S. Senate, Committee on Environment and Public Works; White House.
