

Nomination of Sally Jewell to be the Secretary of the Interior

Witness:

Sally Jewell

Nominee for the Position of Secretary of the Interior

Committee Members

Ron Wyden (D-OR), Chairman

Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Ranking Member

Joe Manchin (D-WV)

John Barrasso (R-WY)

Martin Heinrich (D-NM)

Mike Lee (R-UT)

Mark Udall (D-CO)

Tim Scott (R-SC)

Maria Cantwell (D-WA)

Lamar Alexander (R-TN)

Tim Johnson (D-SD)

Dean Heller (R-NV)

Al Franken (D-MN)

Jim Risch (R-ID)

Mary Landrieu (D-LA)

Jeff Flake (R-AZ)

Bernie Sanders (I-VT)

John Hoeven (R-ND)

On March 7, 2013, the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources held a hearing to consider the nomination of Sally Jewell to be the Secretary of the Interior. Jewell is nominated to replace outgoing Secretary Ken Salazar who served for President Obama's first term. Currently the president and chief executive officer of Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI), Jewell has worked previously in commercial banking and as an engineer for Mobil Oil Corporation. She serves on the Board of Regents for the University of Washington, the Board of Trustees for the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), and the Board of Directors for the Initiative for Global Development.

Chairman Ron Wyden (D-OR) began his opening statement noting that "serving as Secretary of the Interior is almost like an extreme sport for multi-taskers" and Jewell "knows a bit about multi-tasking from having been a petroleum engineer, a corporate CEO, a banker and a conservationist." He stated, "Probably the biggest challenge Ms. Jewell faces will be striking the right balance between the Secretary's dual roles of both conserving and developing our resources." He raised the point that the "economics of public lands have changed" as outdoor recreation creates jobs and generates \$646 billion annually and almost \$40 billion in federal tax revenue. In addition to highlighting state-specific issues in Oregon, Wyden called on Jewell to respond to national issues including "ensuring taxpayers receive full value for resources produced from federal lands, managing the renewable and natural gas energy boom to ensure it is done in an environmentally responsible fashion, and finding a long-term solution to provide resource-dependent communities across the country a fair share of the revenue from federal lands."

In her opening statement, Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) emphasized the need for balance within the Department of the Interior's (DOI) policies. She called on Jewell to "convince us that you will maintain balance in the various missions and interests" of the DOI, "demonstrate an understanding of the issues facing our States, and again, we are looking for your strong commitment to the tenet of multiple use." She stated, "We need you to affirm that public lands provide not just a playground for recreational enthusiasts, but also paychecks for countless energy producers, miners, loggers, and ranchers." She warned against "federal overreach" and "misguided federal restrictions" that make it "harder for local people to live, be safe, and to prosper." She brought up Jewell's statement that one of her "top priorities is to upholding the sacred trust responsibilities to Native American and Alaska Native communities." Murkowski outlined a number of concerns regarding DOI energy resource policies including issues of oil and gas development on federal lands, the possibility of increased federal regulations on hydraulic fracturing, and the limited permitting for mining compared to other countries.

Sally Jewell described her qualifications and outlined her goals for the DOI in her testimony. She described her background with

Mobil Oil, drilling and hydraulically fracturing wells, as well as her career in banking “as an energy and natural resources expert” and later working with a variety of businesses reliant on public lands. She outlined her accomplishments at REI including employing energy conservation and renewable electricity sources to lower the company’s “carbon footprint,” and “organizing volunteer projects and supporting hundreds of community organizations that connect people, urban and rural, to the outdoors.”

Regarding the operation of the DOI, she recognized the economic importance and job creating potential of public and Indian lands. She referenced their multiple uses “from energy development, to grazing, to logging, tourism and outdoor recreation.” DOI earned more than \$12 billion from onshore and offshore energy production while the National Parks “generated an estimated \$30 billion in economic activity and supported over 250,000 jobs in 2011.” She noted that “balance” is crucial at the DOI to “ensure that our public lands and waters are managed wisely, using the best science available, to harness their economic potential while preserving their multiple uses for future generations.”

Her testimony focused extensively on energy policy with a call for “smart policies,” and an “all-of-the-above strategy” that will “expand and diversify our energy production, cut our reliance on foreign oil, and protect our land and water.” In terms of the onshore and offshore oil and gas boom, Jewell emphasized the need to “provide industry with certainty and clarity” while ensuring that “development takes place in a safe and responsible way.” She spoke on the President’s charge to “double renewable electricity generation again by the year 2020” noting the role of the Secretary of the Interior to “make sure that we’re doing that in the right way and in the right places.”

She also spoke to the importance of addressing climate change and committed to “tapping into the vast scientific and land management resources at Interior...to better understand and prepare for the [resulting] challenges.” She praised the “important progress” in conservation in “preserving our lands, waters and wildlife that define us as a people and make it America the beautiful.” She discussed a study by the Kaiser Family Foundations that found that “children spend an average of 53 hours a week in front of a screen” as well as other studies that “estimate that children spend less than 30 minutes a week in unstructured outside play.”

Emphasizing that the U.S. has “a generation of children growing up without any connection to nature,” she aims to “redouble efforts to ensure that our open spaces, trails and parks are accessible and relevant to all people from all backgrounds.”

Wyden inquired about Jewell’s recommendations regarding natural gas development on federal lands. Jewell emphasized the need to “lean into” the resources of the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Land Reclamation, and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) and to “come up with safe ways to develop” resources.

Murkowski questioned Jewell on her work in conservation and “what comfort or assurance” she could provide to those focused on resource development. Jewell stated that there was “no question” that the Interior needed to take a “balanced approach.” As an example, she discussed how people want to utilize the outdoors and public lands for recreation, but need to fuel cars to get there. Joe Manchin (D-WV) asked Jewell to explain what she envisioned as an “all-of-the-above” energy strategy. Jewell outlined such a strategy as including the use of the nation’s “vast reserves” of coal and natural gas, the development of renewable energy resources like wind, and the “leveraging” of technology such as carbon sequestration. She praised the USGS for “doing a good job” in exploring resources. Manchin also asked about oil and gas production on private and public lands. Jewell noted that “technology brought private lands to the front” and reminded the committee that production on a well “does decline over time.”

Dean Heller (R-NV) inquired as to her position on mining and whether she viewed it as a “threat to public lands.” She described her previous business dealings with mines and her understanding of the importance of mined materials. She stated, “I don’t have anything against mining” and noted the need for “responsible development” and the fact that mines she previously worked with followed regulations and functioned responsibly.

Jewell also showed support for working with Mark Udall (D-CO) on challenges facing the Land Water Conservation Fund which she called a “brilliant piece of legislation,” and Tim Johnson (D-SD) on rural water projects.

Bernie Sanders (I-VT) asked about climate change and if it was a “hoax.” Jewell responded that the “scientific evidence is clear” and that there is “no question that it is real.” She stated that “DOI experiences many of the impacts of climate change” and will have to adapt to these impacts. He asked if he could rely on Jewell as a “strong ally” in moving away from fossil fuels, to which she answered that she supported an all-of-the-above strategy with “continued significant emphasis on renewables.”

Martin Heinrich (D-NM) asked if Jewell would use science as her “guiding star,” especially when dealing with controversial issues. She answered that she would.

Opening statements, witness testimonies, and an archived webcast of the hearing can be found on the Committee web site.

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