

**HEARING ON THE NOMINATION OF  
WILLIAM J. RENICK, ADAM WADE WHITE,  
AND JOE H. RITCH TO BE A MEMBER  
OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE  
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY**

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**HEARING**  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLEAN AIR, CLIMATE,  
AND NUCLEAR SAFETY  
OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON  
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS  
SECOND SESSION  
SEPTEMBER 7, 2022

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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

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OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VAL-  
LEY AUTHORITY**

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**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2022**

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON CLEAN AIR, CLIMATE,  
AND NUCLEAR SAFETY,  
*Washington, DC.*

The Subcommittee, met, pursuant to notice, at 2:33 p.m. in room 406, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Edward J. Markey (Chairman of the Subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Markey, Inhofe, Whitehouse, Shelby, Wicker, and Ernst.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD J. MARKEY,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS**

Senator MARKEY. Good afternoon, everyone. I am pleased to call the Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate, and Nuclear Safety to order for a hearing on nominations to the Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors.

Thank you to my Ranking Member, Senator Inhofe, and to the Chairman and Ranking Member of the Committee on Environment and Public Works, Senator Carper and Senator Capito, for their invaluable partnership in holding this hearing and for joining us today. I also want to thank Senator Wicker and Senator Shelby and Senator McConnell for joining us to help introduce the nominees.

It is my pleasure to welcome my colleagues on the Subcommittee, as well as our three nominees for leadership roles at the Tennessee Valley Authority. We welcome them to our Subcommittee today. The core mission of the TVA is just as relevant today as it was when the Authority was created nearly 90 years ago.

In 1933, Congress created the Tennessee Valley Authority to unleash the potential of the rich resources in the Tennessee Valley region and improve the lives of the people who live there. The TVA provides flood control, navigation, and land management for the Tennessee River system. It assists local power companies and regional governments with their economic development efforts, and it provides electricity to 10 million customers, making it the largest public utility in the United States.

And as the Nation's largest public power provider, the TVA serves as an example for public utilities across the country. The TVA can and should foster the kind of innovation that can clean up the region's energy resources, grow union jobs, reduce consumers' energy burdens, improve energy reliability and affordability, and protect the environment, all at the same time.

Just last month, the TVA released its third quarter fiscal year 2022 financial results, which detailed the important role that zero carbon energy played in stabilizing TVA consumers' energy cost, despite volatile fossil fuel prices caused by our dependence on oil and gas that is priced on a global market.

According to the report, natural gas prices soared 141 percent in June compared to last year, following Russia's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. Coal prices also increased significantly. However, thanks to the affordable and more stable zero carbon energy sources in the TVA's power system, TVA's prices rose only by 11 percent this year.

A diverse, clean power mix brings a clear diversity of benefits to customers. But despite the role that renewables can play in lowering consumers' energy prices, only 3 percent of TVA's energy portfolio is comprised of wind and solar. TVA has to change.

In Massachusetts, not the sunniest commonwealth out there, by comparison, 21 percent of our in State, Massachusetts, electricity generation comes from wind and solar. Massachusetts is not the perfectly sunny State. A lot of these TVA States are sunny most of the year, but yet they are only at 3 percent for wind and solar. How can Massachusetts be five times better? Does that really make any sense at all?

The Authority has the opportunity to advance the development and adoption of both utility scale and distributed clean energy in the region, creating jobs, lowering customers' energy bills, as renewable energy continues to outcompete fossil fuels. By increasing the percentage of renewables in its power system, the TVA can reduce pollution and the energy burdens of the TVA customers who already pay some of the highest electricity bills in the Nation as a percentage of household income.

The TVA Board of Directors will make important decisions about TVA's energy planning for years to come. And it is critical that the Board is comprised of leaders who will ensure that the TVA provides all Tennessee Valley households with access to reliable, clean, and affordable electricity while continuing to employ local workers in good paying jobs and supporting economic development in the region.

I look forward to our conversation with the nominees today on these important questions. I would like to congratulate Mr. Renick, Mr. White, Mr. Ritch on their nominations.

I look forward to hearing from all of you today.

Let me now turn and recognize Senator Inhofe, the Ranking Member, for his opening statement, before we will recognize Senator Wicker for his introductory comments.

Senator Inhofe.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JAMES M. INHOFE,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA**

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

While my home State of Oklahoma is not part of the TVA region, having been a former Chairman of this Committee, I have come to know and appreciate the vital role that the TVA plays for the States of Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Virginia.

The Tennessee Valley Authority keeps the lights on for nearly 10 million Americans, and it does so with an all of the above energy approach to power generation, which includes nuclear energy and fossil fuels. Today, nuclear energy and fossil fuels make up nearly 70 percent of the Tennessee Valley Authority's electricity generation portfolio.

The calls to eliminate fossil fuel energy sources from the power sector are foolish and would be devastating for the American people by further increasing already sky high utility bills and creating greater unreliability for the electric grid.

The Tennessee Valley Authority should continue to prioritize reliable and abundant power sources that continue to keep the lights on for the American people. It is my hope that these nominees recognize the need for an all of the above energy approach that includes nuclear and fossil fuels for the power sector now and into the future.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. I thank the Ranking Member.

Now, let me turn to Senator Shelby for his introductory comments.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. RICHARD SHELBY,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF ALABAMA**

Senator SHELBY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for holding this hearing. I appreciate the opportunity to appear here today to introduce Joe Ritch from Huntsville, Alabama.

A long time friend of mine, Joe Ritch was recently nominated by the President to serve on the Tennessee Valley, TVA, Authority's Board of Directors. He has been there before. He has also served as Chairman of the TVA before, with distinction.

Joe Ritch is a practicing attorney, a tax lawyer, business lawyer, very good, good strong Democrat, where he focuses on government contracts and corporate and tax law. He also served as the Chair of the Redstone Regional Alliance, previously known as the Tennessee Valley Base Realignment Commission. In that capacity, Joe Ritch skillfully maintained and relocated several thousand jobs to the Huntsville Madison County area in Alabama. In light of this success, he received the Redstone Good Neighbor Award, as well as the Huntsville Madison County Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Service Award.

He is no stranger to this process. As I mentioned, he has been called upon before. He was previously confirmed by the Senate, this Committee, to serve on the TVA Board from 2013 to 2017, including 4 years as Chairman of the Board of Directors of TVA. Joe was

the first Alabamian ever to serve as Chairman of the TVA Board, a strong indicator of his ability to lead.

Joe Ritch has built his solid reputation not only in his community, but around the State as a hard working, service oriented and highly intelligent individual. He has been an active member of several community organizations at home and a leader in our State's business sector. He loyally served as a member of the Board of Trustees at the University of Alabama, and now serves as a trustee emeritus. And he was inducted in the Alabama Business Hall of Fame in 2021. He holds degrees from the University of Alabama in Huntsville, from Cumberland Law School, and from New York University Law School.

As a former Board Member and Chairman of TVA, I believe he would be a great asset for TVA and its customers. He understands the weight of this role. He understands the interaction of the legislative body and the TVA, and I am proud and pleased to be here to recommend him to the Committee without reservation.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding the hearing, again.

Senator MARKEY. We thank you, Senator Shelby, and now we will turn to Senator Wicker for his introduction.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER WICKER,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI**

Senator WICKER. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

I am delighted to be here today to say a word or two about the importance that TVA continues to have for our region and for my State of Mississippi and to congratulate all three nominees; I am sure Mr. White and Mr. Ritch are absolutely outstanding, but to give as ringing an endorsement as I possibly can for Bill Renick of Ashland, Mississippi.

A word or two about the history of TVA. In 1930, Mississippi had electric power in 85 percent of its larger municipalities, but only 1.5 percent of rural farms and homes. Coming along in 1933, TVA was a game changer. The goal was simple: To improve living and economic conditions in seven southeastern States. And TVA has done that, and continues to do that in new and different ways.

I grew up in the small town of Pontotoc, Mississippi. I now make my home in my wife's native town of Tupelo, and we have lived there for some decades. Tupelo is proudly known as the first TVA city. It was the first to purchase electric power from the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the TVA lights came on in Tupelo in 1934. Today, TVA utilities are located in 36 of our 82 counties and serve more than 359,000 households.

TVA has made significant contributions to our economic development. Between 2017 and 2021, TVA created or retained over 26,000 jobs in Mississippi and invested \$3.6 billion in our economy, so they are far, far more than a provider of electric power. They are a job creator for places like Cooper Tire and Steel Dynamics and Milwaukee Tools in north Mississippi, which leads me to my enthusiastic endorsement of Bill Renick to serve on the TVA Board.

I served with Bill Renick in the State Senate back in 1988 and forward. He is a great job creator. He has worked for Three Rivers Planning and Development District, from which he is now retired. And we have a wonderful group of planning and development dis-

tricts, but I can tell you, none finer than Three Rivers Planning and Development District.

He was work force division director there, Mr. Chairman. He currently Chairs the Commission on the Future of North Mississippi.

Let me say a word about bipartisanship. And I think that the Ranking Member, Mr. Inhofe, will agree with this. Senator Markey is a dear personal friend of mine. Our wives are cordial. We try to agree on things when we can.

Let me tell you about bipartisanship. Bill Renick was elected as Alderman, Mayor, County Supervisor, and State Senator as a north Mississippi Democrat back in the day. He went right straight from that, Mr. Chairman, to being the campaign manager for a statewide candidate for Governor on the Republican ticket. He went right from there to being the chief staff person in the Mississippi State Senate for a Republican Lieutenant Governor of the State of Mississippi.

It wasn't very many years after that that a certain Democratic Governor of Mississippi was looking around for talent and a new chief of staff for his Democratic administration, and he chose Bill Renick. So having managed a campaign statewide as a Republican, having been a chief of staff as a Republican and a chief of staff as a Democrat, we need more bipartisanship like Bill Renick can deliver. Also, we need the job creation and work training expertise that Bill Renick will bring to this office.

Mr. Chairman, have I made it clear the enthusiasm I have and the great fortune we have in this Nation and in the TVA region for the fact that the President has nominated Mr. Bill Renick? And I yield.

Senator MARKEY. That is about as ringing an endorsement of any candidate which I have ever had the privilege of listening to. I thank you for that.

Senator WICKER. And you have been in office these 3 years.

Senator MARKEY. For a long time.

Actually, when I think about bipartisanship, just the Senator sitting next to you, with the preceding introduction, back in 1985 and 1986 when I was the Chair over the Energy Subcommittee on the Energy and Power Committee, Congressman Shelby, then a Democrat from Alabama, wanted me to reauthorize the Tuscaloosa Dam for an additional 20 years of operation to help him in his campaign to win a Senate seat as a Democrat from Alabama. Of course, I willingly worked with him.

Notwithstanding his change over to becoming a Republican after he was elected, I still stand in admiration for Senator Shelby, showing the bipartisan mood that we are creating in this Committee today.

That is when, actually, that is when Senator Inhofe and I began our conversation about climate change in that very same era, over on the House side. Many of those animated conversations, I wish had been captured on video for today, if they could be preserved for posterity.

But the goal here, of course, is to be bipartisan today, and to find a way of being able to make sure that the TVA gets a full complement.

While we wait for Senator McConnell to arrive to give his, I am sure, fulsome introduction of Mr. White, why don't we begin with the first two nominees who have already been introduced. So, if Mr. Ritch and Mr. Renick could move up to the podium, we could have each of you begin with your opening statements, and then after Senator McConnell arrives, why don't you leave the middle one open for Senator McConnell, so when he arrives, he can sit there.

Sir, if you could just leave Mr. McConnell's name in the middle, so when he comes, he can just sit right there, and then introduce Mr. White.

Let us begin, then, by welcoming you, Mr. Ritch, and whenever you feel comfortable, please begin.

**STATEMENT OF JOE H. RITCH, NOMINEE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY**

Mr. RITCH. Thank you, sir.

Senator Shelby, I know you have left the room, but thank you very much for that kind introduction. We are going to miss you.

Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, Subcommittee Chairman Markey, Ranking Member Inhofe, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Joe Ritch, and I am honored to have been nominated by President Biden to the Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors.

The Tennessee Valley has been my home for almost 70 years. Since 1976, I have practiced law in Huntsville, Alabama, concentrating on tax and corporate law and private equity transactions. I have also served on the boards of companies and organizations engaged in research and development for hybrid electric engines, power management, and cybersecurity.

My father, as a young engineer, moved our family to Huntsville in 1954 to join the budding missile and space programs located at Redstone Arsenal near Huntsville. While TVA was taming the Tennessee River, they created a robust power grid and a diverse generation fleet that set the stage for our Nation to address some of its greatest challenges. Overcoming those challenges created opportunities for many other Americans, including, as I mentioned earlier, my own family.

The same reason that our Nation chose to locate the missile and space programs on Redstone Arsenal are the same reasons so many other companies continue to locate in the Tennessee Valley. One, reliable and affordable electricity. Two, TVA's river management operations that enable transportation of goods and an abundant water supply, and plenty of open and beautiful scenery.

I was privileged to previously serve on the Board of Directors of TVA from 2013 until 2017, and as Chair of the Board from May 2014 until my term ended in 2017. I also served as Chair of the TVA's Board of Nuclear Oversight Committee during the course of my tenure.

During my term on the TVA Board, in support of the established missions of TVA, some specific priorities were addressed. Those priorities included reducing the carbon footprint of TVA, right sizing

the work force and generation assets, addressing the challenges related to the nuclear fleet, significant debt reduction, and resolving some long term issues related to the pension plan. Much has changed since my time on the board, but I believe the prior experience will be of value if I am confirmed.

In 1994, I was asked to Chair the Redstone Regional Alliance. The Alliance is a coalition of 13 communities in north Alabama and southcentral Tennessee that promote the growth, the defense, and aerospace industry in our area. TVA's active involvement has been critical to our success. In recent years, I have seen first hand how the area's military and Federal organizations partner with TVA to address energy resiliency and reliability, smart city concepts, utility energy service contracts, and implementation of innovative solutions to energy challenges on these facilities.

The TVA Act directs TVA to provide low cost, sustainable, and reliable energy, protect and promote environmental stewardship, and facilitate economic development. TVA's continued commitments to facilitate broadband infrastructure, advanced nuclear projects, solar, and energy efficiency will play a key role in the continued success. If I am confirmed, I will fully support these efforts.

Clean and renewable energy in the Tennessee Valley is not only good for the environment, but it is also the role it plays in economic development. Many companies looking for economic development sites demand an increasing portion of their energy usage be from renewable and clean energy sources. Time and time again, companies select the valley, knowing that TVA will honor its commitments to potential industrial development projects.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with my fellow board members, management, and employees to achieve these vital objectives of TVA.

Thank you for allowing me to come before this Committee. I look forward to addressing any questions you may have.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ritch follows:]

**Statement of Joe H. Ritch**  
**Nominee to the Tennessee Valley Board of Directors**  
**Before the**  
**U.S Senate Environment and Public Works Committee**  
**Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate and Nuclear Safety**  
**September 7, 2022**

Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, Subcommittee Chairman Markey, Ranking Member Inhofe and Distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Joe Ritch, and I am honored to have been nominated by President Biden to the Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors.

The Tennessee Valley has been my home for almost 70 years. Since 1976, I have practiced law in Huntsville, specializing in tax and corporate law, mergers and acquisitions, and private equity transactions. I have also served on the boards of companies and organizations engaged in research and development for hybrid electric engines, power management, and cybersecurity.

My father, a young engineer, moved our family to Huntsville, Alabama to join the budding missile and space programs located at Redstone Arsenal, near Huntsville. As a child, I spent hundreds of hours on the nearby Tennessee River boating, fishing and swimming. I am certain that I did not fully understand or appreciate the comprehensive role that TVA played in the lives of the citizens of the Valley until much later.

I was privileged to previously serve on the Board of Directors of TVA from 2013 until 2017, and as Chair of the Board from May of 2014 until my term ended in early 2017. I also served as Chair of the TVA Board's Nuclear Oversight Committee during the course of my tenure. Not a week went by that I didn't learn of some new role TVA played in the lives of those of us living in the Tennessee Valley.

TVA is an exceptional organization with vital strategic goals and tremendous capability. When TVA was formed in 1933, it was charged by Congress to improve the quality of life of residents of the Tennessee Valley. While TVA was taming the Tennessee River, it created a robust power grid and diverse generation fleet that set the stage for our nation to address some of its greatest challenges. Overcoming those challenges created opportunities for Americans, too – including, as I mentioned earlier, my own family. The same reasons that the nation chose to locate the rocket and missile programs at Redstone Arsenal are the same reasons so many other companies continue to locate in the Tennessee Valley: 1. Reliable and affordable electricity; 2. TVA's river management operations that enable transportation of goods and water supply; and 3. Plenty of open and beautiful scenery.

In 1994, I was asked to chair the Redstone Regional Alliance (also known as the Tennessee Valley BRAC Committee). The Alliance is a coalition of 13 communities in north Alabama and south-central Tennessee that promote the growth of the defense and aerospace industry in our area. Although it began with just a few communities and chambers of commerce in north Alabama, cities from all over north Alabama and south-central Tennessee reached out and asked to participate in the efforts. The Alliance has given me the opportunity to frequently interact with agencies and commands at Redstone

Arsenal and the nearby communities that are impacted by that growth and learn of the opportunities that growth creates.

In recent years, I have seen firsthand how the area's military and federal organization leadership partner and work together with TVA to address energy resiliency and reliability, smart city concepts, Utility Energy Service Contracts and implementation of innovative solutions to energy challenges on these facilities.

During my term on the TVA Board, in support of the established missions of TVA, some specific priorities were addressed. These priorities included reducing the carbon footprint of TVA, right-sizing the generation fleet and workforce, addressing the challenges related to the nuclear fleet, significant debt reduction and resolving some long-term issues related to the pension plan. Much has changed since my time on the Board, but I believe the prior experience will be of value if I am confirmed.

The TVA Act directs TVA is to provide low-cost, sustainable and reliable energy, protect and promote environmental stewardship and facilitate economic development. TVA's continued commitments to facilitate broadband infrastructure, advanced nuclear projects, solar and energy efficiency will play a key role in the continued success of TVA, and if confirmed, I will fully support these efforts

Clean and renewable energy in the Tennessee Valley is not only good for the environment but also for the role it plays in economic development. Many of the companies looking for economic development sites demand that an increasing portion of their energy usage be from renewable and clean energy sources. Time and time again, companies select the Valley because they know that TVA will honor its commitments to potential industrial development projects.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with my fellow board members, management and employees to achieve these vital objectives of TVA.

Thank you for allowing me to come before this Committee and I look forward to addressing any questions that you may have.

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
Hearing Entitled, *"Hearing on the Nomination of William J. Renick, Adam Wade White, and Joe H. Ritch to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority."*

September 7, 2022

Questions for the Record for Joe H. Ritch

Chairman Markey

1. I am deeply disappointed in the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) decision to move approximately three million tons of toxic coal ash from the Allen Fossil Plant to a dump in south Memphis, despite strong public opposition. If confirmed, would you commit to prioritizing stakeholder engagement, particularly in regard to important issues around environmental health and justice?

**I agree with the need for stakeholder engagement, and if confirmed, I commit that I will prioritize stakeholder engagement particularly in regard to important issues around environmental health and justice.**

2. In 2020, the TVA tried to outsource more than 200 union jobs during the pandemic. While that effort was temporarily blocked, I remain concerned about efforts to offshore American union jobs. If confirmed, would you prioritize efforts to keep TVA jobs local and support the use of union labor?

**TVA has a highly qualified workforce and if confirmed, I commit that I will prioritize and support the efforts to use American union labor and keep the TVA jobs local.**

3. Last year, the TVA Board voted to delegate its authority to make decisions regarding the Kingston and Cumberland coal plants to the TVA CEO, Jeff Lyash. I am concerned that this type of action makes TVA less transparent and less accountable to the Board and the public.

- a. If confirmed, would you commit to preserving the Board's authority on important decisions like those on the Kingston and Cumberland plants?

**If confirmed, I will commit to support the need for the Board to maintain its authority over important decisions that are properly within the Board's role in oversight.**

- b. If confirmed, would you commit to supporting public engagement and transparency, including for Board committee?

**Public engagement and transparency are important for TVA to effectively serve its customers and if confirmed, I will commit to support public engagement and transparency as an effective manner to learn of the challenges facing stakeholders.**

**Ex-Officio Chairman Carper**

1. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) must be an industry leader when it comes to clean energy, energy efficiency, and safety.
  - a. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that TVA is a national leader in clean energy, technological innovation, environmental stewardship, and safety?

**TVA should be a national leader in the areas described in the question, and if I am confirmed, I will work as a Board member with management and other Board members to ensure that TVA is a national leader in clean energy, technological innovation, environmental stewardship, and safety.**

- b. If confirmed, what is one thing you will do to ensure that TVA invests in cleaner air, clean renewable energy, and energy efficiency?

**To ensure that clean and renewable energy goals are met, it will be necessary for TVA to prudently invest in cleaner air, clean renewable energy, and energy efficiency. I commit to learning from management and others of the opportunities that such investments may offer and if there are obstacles to making appropriate investments, what is TVA doing to overcome those obstacles. If confirmed, I expect to receive (along with other Board members) updates addressing TVA's progress in investment (and results) in the areas described in this question.**

2. Following the closure of the coal ash ponds at the TVA's coal-fired Allen Fossil Plant, TVA has moved forward with its plans to relocate 3.5 million cubic yards of toxic coal ash – enough to fill two and a half Empire State Buildings – to the South Shelby Landfill in South Memphis, Tennessee. Under TVA's plan, trucks carrying the coal ash will make almost daily trips using local streets in Memphis for at least 8 years. Local residents in the predominantly low-income and minority neighborhoods near the landfill site and along the truck route are concerned about the continued impact of pollution – including from diesel emissions from these trucks, the potential for the coal ash to spill out if a crash were to happen, and potential runoff from the landfill site that could contaminate drinking water.
  - a. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that TVA is a good actor and that TVA's actions are transparent to local communities?

**TVA must be a good actor when its actions materially impact a local community, and I will commit to ensuring that management is taking appropriate steps to ensure that the actions and the reasons for the actions are transparent to those impacted.**

- b. If confirmed, will you also commit to engage with residents and take actions to protect frontline communities that have disproportionately suffered from industrial pollution – including from air pollution and toxic coal ash contamination?

**TVA should engage with residents and others in frontline communities that are disproportionately impacted by industrial pollution and coal ash contamination and if confirmed, I will commit to support comprehensive engagement and learn how TVA is addressing the concerns of impacted residents.**

- c. If confirmed, will you commit to doing all you can to ensure TVA cleans up its current coal ash sites and prevents further contamination?

**If confirmed, I will consider it a priority to receive regular updates on the progress TVA is making on remediation plans for coal ash sites and what steps are being taken to avoid any further contamination and the effectiveness of such efforts. Regular reports from management will be helpful in determining whether the remediation plans are successfully achieving the intended results.**

3. Is there anything else you would like to provide the Committee that was not included in your testimony or discussed during the hearing?

**Yes, if confirmed, I look forward to joining the Board recognizing the need to familiarize myself with the many positive initiatives TVA is engaged and how those initiatives relate to the goals of low cost and dependable electricity, environmental stewardship and economic development.**

**Senator Wicker**

1. The TVA Act notes that TVA is responsible for advancing “the economic and social well-being of the people living in” the Tennessee River Basin. This is a responsibility that extends well beyond its traditional role of power generation and distribution. Given the importance of broadband connectivity in today’s economy, it could be argued that this responsibility requires TVA to ensure that residents of the service area have access to quality internet service. However, there are many TVA area households that lack broadband service. TVA should ensure it is assisting in closing the broadband gap that impacts residents’ economic and social well-being. This includes affording broadband providers access to LPC poles in a timely and cost-efficient manner. A lack of cooperation on pole access could jeopardize the full impact of congressional funding intended to speed up broadband deployment in rural areas – especially those areas without any broadband options. My understanding is that TVA has the authority to act on this issue, including pole access, but, to date, it has refrained from doing so. If confirmed, will you examine this issue more fully and take steps needed to ensure that a local power company’s broadband deployment and pole access process is speedy and cost efficient for providers seeking to deploy broadband in the Tennessee Valley?

**Yes, I commit to examining this issue fully. TVA should ensure that steps are taken to remove unreasonable impediments to expansion of broadband to assist speedy and cost-effective deployment. Broadband is necessary for communities to participate on a level playing field when it relates to, among other things, remote education, healthcare, economic development, and the general welfare of the citizens in TVA’s footprint. If confirmed, I will support TVA’s efforts to promote broadband especially in those areas that are most in need of TVA’s assistance.**

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Ritch, so much.

We are now joined by the minority leader, the Senator from Kentucky, Senator McConnell.

We welcome you and your comments for your introductory remarks.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MITCH MCCONNELL,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF KENTUCKY**

Senator MCCONNELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Senator Inhofe.

I appreciate the opportunity to interject here for a moment and talk about a good friend of mine that I have known and worked with for many years, and that is Judge Wade White.

In Kentucky, we have a funny title for the CEOs of counties. They are called County Judges. They are not judges, really; they are like county executives, run county government. Wade has been the county executive in one of our important western Kentucky counties for many years, and has done an incredible job.

Looking at TVA today, increasing energy prices, rising inflation, and stagnant economic growth are all putting pressure on American families. We need leaders who understand that our electric system's primary purpose is to provide affordable, reliable power to consumers, especially true of the 10 million people, many of them Kentuckians, who rely on the Tennessee Valley Authority for their electricity needs.

TVA is the largest public utility in our country, and my home State of Kentucky is uniquely impacted by decisions made by its leaders. We are home to the longest hydroelectric dam and its grid and to more than 215,000 households that rely on TVA for their everyday power.

At the moment, Kentucky does not have a representative, so that is why I am doubly proud to be here with my friend, Lyon County Judge Executive Wade White. I know that, if confirmed, he will bring both common sense and a unique bluegrass perspective to his role.

As I indicated earlier, we have worked together on a number of issues. We have had unusual issues. For example, the species, Asian carp, invading our lakes and making them inhospitable for tourism, Wade was the leader in getting focus on trying to do something about this species that was literally ruining our major lakes produced by TVA. So as TVA continues to expand and modernize its power generating capabilities, Wade is uniquely situated to make an important contribution to the Board.

Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity to come by and offer my thoughts.

[The prepared statement of Senator McConnell follows:]

**Judge Wade White Nomination Introduction**

Remarks of Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell  
Wednesday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Inhofe, Colleagues:

It's my privilege to introduce Judge Wade White for your consideration for the Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors.

Increasing energy prices, rising inflation, and stagnant economic growth are placing new pressures on American families.

We need leaders who understand that our electric system's primary purpose is to provide affordable, reliable power to consumers.

That's especially true for the ten million people, many of them Kentuckians, who rely on the Tennessee Valley Authority for their electricity needs.

TVA is the largest public utility in our country and my home state of Kentucky is uniquely impacted by decisions made by its leaders.

We are home to the longest hydroelectric dam in its grid and to more than 215,000 households that rely on TVA for their everyday power needs.

Unfortunately, the current TVA Board lacks representation from our state.

That's why I'm proud to introduce my friend, Lyon County Judge-Executive Wade White, for nomination to this important body.

I know that, if confirmed, he will bring both common sense and a unique Bluegrass perspective to this role.

Wade and I have worked together for years, pushing for targeted federal investment in areas like Asian Carp, Barkley Dam, and Land Between the Lakes.

These projects overlap with many of the issues facing the TVA system as a whole. Wade's successful stewardship of Kentucky's waterways demonstrates strong leadership potential for the TVA Board.

As TVA continues to expand and modernize its power-generating capabilities, leaders like Wade will play a critical role in ensuring consumers can continue to count on affordable and reliable electricity.

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce this fine candidate to this Committee.

I look forward to Wade's continued service to our country as a proven leader on the TVA Board.

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Senator MARKEY. We thank the minority leader for his important comments. It is quite an honor to be introduced by the minority leader for such an important post. We thank you, sir.

We then welcome the nominee, Mr. White, up to the table, if he would join with his other nominees.

Then we will just continue with the testimony and move to you, Mr. Renick.

**STATEMENT OF WILLIAM J. RENICK, NOMINEE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY**

Mr. RENICK. Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, Chairman Markey, Ranking Member Inhofe, and members of the Committee, thank you all for the opportunity to appear before this Committee.

I am truly honored and humbled to be nominated by President Biden to serve on the Tennessee Valley Board of Directors. And I am so appreciative to my two Senators and friends, Roger Wicker and Cindy Hyde-Smith, for their support throughout the process of my nomination and for their support of TVA.

My name is Bill Renick, and I am from Ashland, Mississippi, a beautiful little town about 45 minutes east of Memphis and about 45 minutes west of Tupelo, which just happens to be the first TVA city, the very first city to receive electricity from TVA.

Both my parents were lifelong public school teachers. My wife, Debbie, and I have been married for 48 years and have two children, Will and Susie, and two grandchildren. I am a long time member of Ashland Baptist Church, where I teach a Sunday school class. My faith and my family are very important to me.

The public service bug bit me at an early age. The first time that I could vote, I voted for myself. At the ripe old age of 18, I was elected to the Board of Aldermen in Ashland. After serving two terms, I was elected mayor. I then was elected to the Benton County Board of Supervisors, where I served as vice chairman, and subsequently to the Mississippi State Senate.

Following my time in the State legislature, I served as the chief of staff to both Republican Lieutenant Governor Eddie Briggs and Democratic Governor Ronnie Musgrove. In between those two terms, I was President of the Mississippi Retail Association and later, Administrator of Holly Springs Memorial Hospital.

I have also spent a great deal of my career in economic and work force development. After Governor Musgrove's term ended, I was named Executive Director of the Marshall County Industrial Development Authority and helped develop very successful sites that are now home to companies such as Amazon, Volvo, ASICS, McCormick Spices, Corelle, Cooper Tire, and Kellogg's. All are powered by TVA generated electricity, which was a key component to their locating in Mississippi.

I spent the last 13 years of my full time working career as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, WIOA, Division Director at Three Rivers Planning and Development District in Pontotoc, Mississippi, retiring in June 2021. There, we administered the Federal work force training funds for 27 counties in north Mississippi.

As exemplified by my background, I have lived and served my entire life in the TVA service area. I was proud to be part of helping with the development and location of those major companies that I previously named, but would also like to share an early experience from when I was a young alderman in Ashland and a small, locally owned company, TCI, Torque Converters Incorporated, was working to build their first facility in Ashland.

We had one small area of need to close the deal: We had to pave the parking lot so the employees could have a place out of the mud to park and the trucks could get the finished product in and out of the building. That need was filled by TVA, and 50 years later, that company, TCI, is still building torque converters in Ashland.

The three Es of TVA, energy, environment, and economic development, are all extremely important to the citizens of the valley, just as they have been since 1933. The TVA mission of providing safe, clean, reliable, and affordable power is a mission that must continue to be achieved to ensure the economic growth of the Tennessee Valley region.

Also important to the livelihoods of the 10 million citizens that depend on TVA is their responsibility to manage and maintain the beautiful natural environment and recreational opportunities with which the region is blessed. It is a tremendous responsibility.

I will commit to listen, to learn, to evaluate, and to execute using the same common sense that has served me well in over 50 years of public service. My dedication to the mission of TVA and its millions of citizen users will be supported by my ultimate commitment to treat and serve my fellow man as I would want to be treated and served. I learned that Golden Rule way of life a long time ago at Ashland Baptist Church.

Thank you again for this opportunity. If confirmed, I am excited and anxious to go to work.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Renick follows:]

**Statement of William J. "Bill" Renick**  
**Nominee to the Tennessee Valley Board of Directors**  
**Before the**  
**U.S Senate Environment and Public Works Committee**  
**Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate and Nuclear Safety**  
**September 7, 2022**

Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, Chairman Markey, Ranking Member Inhofe, and members of the committee.

Thank you all for the opportunity to appear before this committee. I am truly honored and humbled to be nominated by President Biden to serve on the Tennessee Valley Board of Directors, and I am so appreciative to my two senators and friends, Roger Wicker and Cindy Hyde-Smith, for their support throughout the process of my nomination and for their support of TVA.

My name is Bill Renick, and I am from Ashland, Mississippi, a beautiful little town about 45 minutes east of Memphis and about 45 minutes west of Tupelo, which just happens to be the first TVA city - the very first city to receive electricity from TVA. Both my parents were lifelong public-school teachers. My wife, Debbie and I have been married for 48 years and have two children, Will and Suzy, and two grandchildren. I am a long-time member of Ashland Baptist Church, where I teach a Sunday School class. My faith and my family are very important to me.

The public service bug bit me at a very early age. The first time that I could vote, I voted for myself. At the ripe old age of 18, I was elected to the Board of Alderman in Ashland. After serving two terms, I was elected mayor. I then was elected to the Benton County Board of Supervisors where I served as vice-chairman, and subsequently to the Mississippi State Senate.

Following my time in the state legislature, I served as the chief-of-staff to both Republican Lt. Governor Eddie Briggs and Democratic Governor Ronnie Musgrove. In between those two terms, I was president of the Mississippi Retail Association and later administrator of Holly Springs Memorial Hospital. I have also spent a great deal of my career in economic and workforce development. After Governor Musgrove's term ended, I was named executive director of the Marshall County Industrial Development Authority and helped develop very successful industrial sites that now are home to companies such as Amazon, Volvo, Asics, McCormick Spices, Corelle, Cooper Tire, and Kellogg's. All are powered by TVA generated electricity, which was a key component to their locating in Mississippi.

I spent the last 13 years of my full-time working career as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Division Director at Three Rivers Planning and Development District in Pontotoc, MS, retiring in June of 2021. There we administered federal workforce training funds for 27 counties in North Mississippi.

As exemplified by my background, I have lived and served my entire life in the TVA service area. I was proud to be a part of helping with the development and location of those major companies that I

previously named, but I would also like to share an early experience from when I was a young alderman in Ashland and a small, locally owned company named TCI, Torque Convertors Incorporated, was working to build their first facility in Ashland. We had one small area of need to close the deal. We had to pave the parking lot so the employees could have a place out of the mud to park and the trucks could get the finished product in and out of the building. That need was filled by TVA, and 50 years later that company, TCI, is still building torque convertors in Ashland.

The three Es of TVA, Energy, Environment, and Economic Development are all extremely important to the citizens of the Valley, just as they have been since 1933. The TVA mission of providing safe, clean, reliable, and affordable power is a mission that must continue to be achieved to insure the economic growth of the Tennessee Valley region. Also important to the livelihoods of the 10 million citizens that depend on TVA is their responsibility to manage and maintain the beautiful natural environment and recreational opportunities with which the region is blessed. It is a tremendous responsibility.

I will commit to listen, to learn, to evaluate, and to execute using the same common sense that has served me well in my over 50 years of public service. My dedication to the mission of TVA and its millions of citizen users will be supported by my ultimate commitment to treat and serve my fellowman as I would want to be treated and served. I learned that "golden rule" way of life a long time ago at Ashland Baptist Church.

Thank you again for this opportunity. If confirmed, I'm excited and anxious to go to work.

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
Hearing Entitled, "Hearing on the Nomination of William J. Renick, Adam Wade White, and Joe H. Rutch to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority."

September 7, 2022

Questions for the Record for William J. Renick

Chairman Markey

1. I am deeply disappointed in the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) decision to move approximately three million tons of toxic coal ash from the Allen Fossil Plant to a dump in south Memphis, despite strong public opposition. If confirmed, would you commit to prioritizing stakeholder engagement, particularly in regards to important issues around environmental health and justice?

**I absolutely believe in stakeholder engagement and if confirmed I commit to it as a priority of mine.**

2. In 2020, the TVA tried to outsource more than 200 union jobs during the pandemic. While that effort was temporarily blocked, I remain concerned about efforts to offshore American union jobs. If confirmed, would you prioritize efforts to keep TVA jobs local and support the use of union labor?

**I absolutely would prioritize keeping TVA jobs local and supporting the use of union labor.**

3. Last year, the TVA Board voted to delegate its authority to make decisions regarding the Kingston and Cumberland coal plants to the TVA CEO, Jeff Lyash. I am concerned that this type of action makes TVA less transparent and less accountable to the Board and the public.
  - a. If confirmed, would you commit to preserving the Board's authority on important decisions like those on the Kingston and Cumberland plants?

**I believe Board members have the duty to educate ourselves, working with the TVA leadership team, about the important matters before TVA. The Board then also has the responsibility to make certain decisions according to the TVA Act. I will commit to fulfilling those responsibilities if confirmed.**

- b. If confirmed, would you commit to supporting public engagement and transparency, including for Board committee meetings?

**I absolutely commit to public engagement and transparency to the greatest degree possible.**

Ex-Officio Chairman Carper

1. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) must be an industry leader when it comes to clean energy, energy efficiency, and safety.

- a. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that TVA is a national leader in clean energy, technological innovation, environmental stewardship, and safety?

**I agree that TVA should be a leader in clean energy, technological innovation, environmental stewardship, and safety, and if confirmed I will commit to ensure that those goals are pursued.**

- b. If confirmed, what is one thing you will do to ensure that TVA invests in cleaner air, clean renewable energy, and energy efficiency?

**I will make it a priority of mine to become more educated on the various options of renewable energy and energy efficiency and work toward increasing TVA's commitment to efficiency both at the generation point and the end user point.**

- 2. Following the closure of the coal ash ponds at the TVA's coal-fired Allen Fossil Plant, TVA has moved forward with its plans to relocate 3.5 million cubic yards of toxic coal ash – enough to fill two and a half Empire State Buildings – to the South Shelby Landfill in South Memphis, Tennessee. Under TVA's plan, trucks carrying the coal ash will make almost daily trips using local streets in Memphis for at least 8 years. Local residents in the predominantly low-income and minority neighborhoods near the landfill site and along the truck route are concerned about the continued impact of pollution – including from diesel emissions from these trucks, the potential for the coal ash to spill out if a crash were to happen, and potential runoff from the landfill site that could contaminate drinking water.

- a. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that TVA is a good actor and that TVA's actions are transparent to local communities?

**I believe very strongly in TVA being a good neighbor to all communities in the TN Valley region. If confirmed, I will make it a priority of mine to ensure that communities can be heard on matters that specifically affect their locality.**

- b. If confirmed, will you also commit to engage with residents and take actions to protect frontline communities that have disproportionately suffered from industrial pollution – including from air pollution and toxic coal ash contamination?

**If confirmed, I will make myself available to citizens to listen and do my best to make decisions that protect frontline communities and keep them safe from all forms of pollution.**

- c. If confirmed, will you commit to doing all you can to ensure TVA cleans up its current coal ash sites and prevents further contamination?

**Yes.**

- 3. Is there anything else you would like to provide the Committee that was not included in your testimony or discussed during the hearing?

**No.**

Senator Wicker

1. The TVA Act notes that TVA is responsible for advancing “the economic and social well-being of the people living in” the Tennessee River Basin. This is a responsibility that extends well beyond its traditional role of power generation and distribution. Given the importance of broadband connectivity in today’s economy, it could be argued that this responsibility requires TVA to ensure that residents of the service area have access to quality internet service. However, there are many TVA area households that lack broadband service. TVA should ensure it is assisting in closing the broadband gap that impacts residents’ economic and social well-being. This includes affording broadband providers access to LPC poles in a timely and cost-efficient manner. A lack of cooperation on pole access could jeopardize the full impact of congressional funding intended to speed up broadband deployment in rural areas – especially those areas without any broadband options. My understanding is that TVA has the authority to act on this issue, including pole access, but, to date, it has refrained from doing so. If confirmed, will you examine this issue more fully and take steps needed to ensure that a local power company’s broadband deployment and pole access process is speedy and cost efficient for providers seeking to deploy broadband in the Tennessee Valley?

**Broadband access in the TVA region is of utmost importance to me. I am a long-time member of the Board of Directors of MEGAPOP (Mississippi Economic Growth Alliance and Point of Presence) headquartered in Tupelo, Mississippi, which has a sole mission of expanding broadband access to communities all over the region of North Mississippi. That region is also the TVA region. If confirmed, I will absolutely examine this issue further with the appropriate people at TVA and will make it perfectly clear of my support for TVA’s involvement with this very important issue.**

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Renick, so much.  
Now Mr. White, we are looking forward to your testimony.

**STATEMENT OF ADAM WADE WHITE, NOMINEE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY**

Mr. WHITE. Thank you, Subcommittee Chairman Markey, Ranking Member Inhofe, members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

I am honored to have been nominated by President Biden to serve on the Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors. Thank you to the Committee for considering my nomination.

I know Senator McConnell has left the room, but he is a good friend. I appreciate him suggesting me to the President. I appreciate every time I have knocked on his door for problems we are experiencing in my county, he has always opened it. So he has been a good friend, and I appreciate him for that.

By way of introduction, I have been a lifelong resident of western Kentucky within the footprint of the Tennessee Valley. I grew up in Lyon County, Kentucky, enjoying the benefits of fishing on Lake Barkley and Kentucky Lake, where I fished below Kentucky Dam, a TVA hydroelectric dam.

I graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky in 1995, and my wife, DeeDee, and I are the proud parents of Brandon and Jenna White. In 2010, I won my first term as Lyon County Judge Executive, and am currently finishing my third term. Serving as Judge Executive has prepared me well for this position. Lyon County is a small county nestled between Lake Barkley and Kentucky Lake. Lake Barkley is controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Kentucky is controlled by the TVA. Sixty percent of Lyon County is controlled by a State or Federal agency.

This is significant, and has given me a great understanding of how large agencies can have both a positive and a negative impact on local communities, and how important it is to always work to serve the people first.

TVA provides a number of benefits to my county, aside from hydroelectricity. It affords the natural resources of the lake to locals and tourists from all over the country. During my service as Judge Executive, we have benefited from a strong tourism and fishing industry that has ripple effects all across western Kentucky. My heart is in protecting, promoting, and conserving these natural resources, our fisheries and wildlife.

Another impact TVA is having in my county is with economic development. My county is a recipient of approximately \$150,000 per year for use in economic development via TVA's payment in lieu of taxes. A small county like ours could never generate the tax base for such an endeavor.

TVA is also having an impact on my county's ability to receive fast, reliable Internet. Fortunately, the southern section of Lyon County is serviced by Pennyrite Rural Electric, a TVA customer, our local power company. With the leadership of Pennyrite president Alan Gates, my county signed a contract with Pennyrite Rural Electric to service customers within their footprint with fiber Internet.

Within a year, Pennyrile Rural has matched dollar for dollar a large portion of the American Rescue Plan Act money and a recent grant altogether totaling \$2.8 million for a phase one build out, which is going on as I speak. This was all made possible because TVA made a way for their LPCs to invest in Internet. I plan to support the further development of Internet within the TVA footprint.

Lyon County is also the planned home to one of the largest solar farms in Kentucky. The planned solar farm will cover 800 acres and is planned to start next year. In 2021, I was appointed by Governor Andy Beshear to serve as a member of the Kentucky State Electric Generation and Transmission Siting Board. During my service, we were able to work out the permitting for the RWE Group to build the solar farm.

I look forward to bringing this experience to the TVA Board of Directors and assist with similar future projects.

It is an honor to be appointed by the President for this position. I am thankful to be here today in this confirmation process. I will work hard to educate myself on the issues we face, and always use a common sense approach in making decisions that affect the more than 10 million customers across the Tennessee Valley.

Thank you all for considering my nomination. I would appreciate the opportunity to serve as a Board Director for the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. White follows:]

**Statement of Adam "Wade" White**  
**Nominee to the Tennessee Valley Board of Directors**  
**Before the**  
**U.S Senate Environment and Public Works Committee**  
**Subcommittee on Clean Air, Climate and Nuclear Safety**  
**September 7, 2022**

Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, Subcommittee Chairman Markey, Ranking Member Inhofe, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to have been nominated by President Biden to serve on the Tennessee Valley Authority Board of Directors. I also would like to acknowledge and thank Senate Minority Leader McConnell for his recommendation of me to the president and all his help throughout this confirmation process. Thank you to the committee for considering my nomination.

By way of introduction, I have been a lifelong resident of Western Kentucky within the footprint of the Tennessee Valley. I grew up in Lyon County, Kentucky, enjoying the benefits of fishing on Lake Barkley and Kentucky Lake. I have spent a lifetime of fishing above and below Kentucky Dam, a TVA hydroelectric dam. I graduated with a bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky in 1995 and went to work in the insurance industry.

In 2010, I won my first term as Lyon County Judge Executive, and I am currently serving out my third term. My years as judge executive have prepared me immensely for this position. Lyon County is a small county uniquely situated within the boundaries of multiple government owned land. Lake Barkley flows through the heart of Lyon County owned by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Barkley Dam, also in Lyon County, and Kentucky Dam is near our border. Sixty percent of Lyon County is controlled by a state or federal agency. This is significant and has given me a great understanding of how large agencies can have both a positive and negative impact on local communities and how important it is to always work to serve the people first.

I am very familiar with the benefits TVA has provided to my county, not only with Kentucky Dam's hydroelectric, but also the natural resources the lake provides to locals and our tourists from all over the country. During my service as Judge Executive, we have benefited from a strong tourism and fishing industry that has ripple effects across Western Kentucky. My heart is in protecting, promoting, and conserving these natural resources, our fisheries and wildlife.

Another impact TVA is having in my county is with economic development. My county is a recipient of approximately \$150,000 per year for use in economic development via TVA's payments in lieu of taxes. A small county like ours could never generate enough tax base for such an endeavor. It is a game changer and allows our county to compete for good high paying jobs.

TVA is also having an impact on my county's ability to receive fast, reliable internet. Fortunately, the southern section of Lyon County is serviced by Pennyrile Rural Electric, a TVA customer, or local power

company (LPC). With the leadership of Pennyrile President Alan Gates, my county signed a contract with Pennyrile Rural Electric to service customers within their footprint with fiber internet. Within a year, Pennyrile Rural has matched dollar for dollar our American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money and received a grant all totaling to a 2.8-million-dollar investment in the phase one buildout, which is going on as I speak. This was all made possible because TVA made a way for their LPCs to invest in internet. It is my understanding more LPCs within TVA are looking at the work in my county as a model for other areas within the TVA area. I plan to support the further development of internet within the TVA footprint.

Lyon County is also the planned home to one of the largest solar farms in Kentucky. The planned solar farm covers 800 acres with an expansion plan set to start within the coming year. In 2021, I was appointed by Governor Andy Beshear to serve as a member of the Kentucky State Electric Generation and Transmission Siting Board. During my service, we were able to work out the plans for the RWE Group to build this solar farm, and the permit has been granted. I would look forward to bringing this experience to the TVA Board of Directors and assist with similar future projects in the TVA footprint.

It is an honor to be appointed by the president for this position, and I am thankful to be here today in the confirmation process. I will work hard to educate myself and always use a commonsense approach in making decisions that affect the more than 10 million customers across the Tennessee Valley. Thank you all for considering my nomination, and I would appreciate the opportunity to serve as a Board Director for the Tennessee Valley Authority.

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Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works  
Hearing Entitled, "Hearing on the Nomination of William J. Renick, Adam Wade White, and Joe H. Rutch to be a Member of the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority."

September 7, 2022

Questions for the Record for Adam Wade White

Chairman Markey

1. I am deeply disappointed in the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) decision to move approximately three million tons of toxic coal ash from the Allen Fossil Plant to a dump in south Memphis, despite strong public opposition. If confirmed, would you commit to prioritizing stakeholder engagement, particularly in regards to important issues around environmental health and justice?

**If confirmed, I will do my best to consider and engage all stakeholders who are impacted by the decisions we make. Since my first day as Judge Executive twelve years ago, I have fought to stand up for those who do not have a voice against the decisions of large agencies. I led the creation of the Coalition to Preserve the Land Between the Lakes when the Forest Service proposed large clear cuts. The coalition was made up of conservatives, liberals, progressives, and everyone in between, and we were heard. I led a coalition called Freedom to Fish to protect fishermen who had no voice against a large agency, USACE. It is in my heart to consider and stand for those who feel their voice is unheard.**

2. In 2020, the TVA tried to outsource more than 200 union jobs during the pandemic. While that effort was temporarily blocked, I remain concerned about efforts to offshore American union jobs. If confirmed, would you prioritize efforts to keep TVA jobs local and support the use of union labor?

**Yes, I will support the TVA employee first.**

3. Last year, the TVA Board voted to delegate its authority to make decisions regarding the Kingston and Cumberland coal plants to the TVA CEO, Jeff Lyash. I am concerned that this type of action makes TVA less transparent and less accountable to the Board and the public.
  - a. If confirmed, would you commit to preserving the Board's authority on important decisions like those on the Kingston and Cumberland plants?

**I am not familiar with this decision and the impact it has had on the Board's authority. I can say, if confirmed, I will work to ensure thorough oversight of important issues such as those regarding generation facilities. The CEO needs the ability to act and administer the needs of the TVA, but the Board of Directors also has responsibilities under the TVA Act to fulfill.**

- b. If confirmed, would you commit to supporting public engagement and transparency, including for Board committee meetings?

**During my twelve years as Judge Executive, I have made transparency a priority. I have fought for transparency with the federal agencies that work in my county.**

**Transparency will be a priority for me as a TVA Board Director as well if confirmed.**

**Ex-Officio Chairman Carper**

1. The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) must be an industry leader when it comes to clean energy, energy efficiency, and safety.
  - a. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that TVA is a national leader in clean energy, technological innovation, environmental stewardship, and safety?

**Yes, we should do all we can to lead in every area we are entrusted with as an agency.**

- b. If confirmed, what is one thing you will do to ensure that TVA invests in cleaner air, clean renewable energy, and energy efficiency?

**TVA has a goal of adding 10,000 megawatts of solar generation. I understand much of this is stalled due to the market and difficulty for contractors to obtain product. If confirmed, one thing that I will look to be engaged in is working with TVA leadership to find solutions that will keep TVA on the path of its stated solar goal.**

2. Following the closure of the coal ash ponds at the TVA's coal-fired Allen Fossil Plant, TVA has moved forward with its plans to relocate 3.5 million cubic yards of toxic coal ash – enough to fill two and a half Empire State Buildings – to the South Shelby Landfill in South Memphis, Tennessee. Under TVA's plan, trucks carrying the coal ash will make almost daily trips using local streets in Memphis for at least 8 years. Local residents in the predominantly low-income and minority neighborhoods near the landfill site and along the truck route are concerned about the continued impact of pollution – including from diesel emissions from these trucks, the potential for the coal ash to spill out if a crash were to happen, and potential runoff from the landfill site that could contaminate drinking water.
  - a. If confirmed, will you commit to ensuring that TVA is a good actor and that TVA's actions are transparent to local communities?

**If confirmed, I will do my best to consider and engage all stakeholders who are impacted by the decisions the TVA Board makes in fulfilling its duties. Since my first day as Judge Executive twelve years ago, I have fought to stand up for those who do not have a voice against the decisions of large agencies. I led the creation of the Coalition to Preserve the Land Between the Lakes when the Forest Service proposed large clear cuts. The coalition was made up of conservatives, liberals, progressives, and everyone in between, and we were heard. I led a coalition called Freedom to Fish to protect fishermen who had no voice against a large agency, USACE. It is in my heart to consider and stand for those who feel their voice is unheard.**

- b. If confirmed, will you also commit to engage with residents and take actions to protect frontline communities that have disproportionately suffered from industrial pollution – including from air pollution and toxic coal ash contamination?

Yes.

- c. If confirmed, will you commit to doing all you can to ensure TVA cleans up its current coal ash sites and prevents further contamination?

**I commit to looking into this, if confirmed, and doing all I can as a Board of Director to prevent further contamination.**

3. Is there anything else you would like to provide the Committee that was not included in your testimony or discussed during the hearing?

**Yes, I want to share that if confirmed, I would commit to being very accessible to you, other Members of Congress and staff on any issues that come before the TVA Board of which you are interested. I will share my personal cell phone and email upon request and commit to speaking by phone, text, email, virtual or in-person meeting.**

**Senator Wicker**

1. The TVA Act notes that TVA is responsible for advancing “the economic and social well-being of the people living in” the Tennessee River Basin. This is a responsibility that extends well beyond its traditional role of power generation and distribution. Given the importance of broadband connectivity in today’s economy, it could be argued that this responsibility requires TVA to ensure that residents of the service area have access to quality internet service. However, there are many TVA area households that lack broadband service. TVA should ensure it is assisting in closing the broadband gap that impacts residents’ economic and social well-being. This includes affording broadband providers access to LPC poles in a timely and cost-efficient manner. A lack of cooperation on pole access could jeopardize the full impact of congressional funding intended to speed up broadband deployment in rural areas – especially those areas without any broadband options. My understanding is that TVA has the authority to act on this issue, including pole access, but, to date, it has refrained from doing so. If confirmed, will you examine this issue more fully and take steps needed to ensure that a local power company’s broadband deployment and pole access process is speedy and cost efficient for providers seeking to deploy broadband in the Tennessee Valley?

**Yes. The southern section of my county benefits from the TVA’s openness for their Local Power Companies (LPCs) to allow fiber on their poles. Our local LPC is matching dollar for dollar any grants or money from the county to expand internet. My county used all our American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money for internet with \$500,000 going toward the TVA LPC, Pennyrite Rural Electric. I was excited to sign this contract, and we now have a 2.8 million dollar internet expansion taking place in one of the most rural areas in Western Kentucky. This is important to my county constituents and will be a top priority for me as a Board of Director, should I be confirmed.**

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. White.

I am going to ask you a couple of housekeeping questions, and then yield to Senator Inhofe for his questions. Then I am going over to make the roll call on the Senate floor and return to continue the questions from myself and other members.

We are now ready to begin questions for the witnesses. Before we start with individual questions, this Committee has three standing yes or no questions that it asks of all nominees that appear before it. I will ask the questions and work my way across all of our nominees here today.

One, do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee or designated members of this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress and provide information with respect to your responsibilities subject to appropriate and necessary security protections?

Do you, Mr. Renick?

Mr. RENICK. Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. Do you, Mr. White?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. Do you, Mr. Ritch?

Mr. RITCH. Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings, documents, and electronic and other forms of communication of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate committees in a timely manner?

Do you, Mr. Renick?

Mr. RENICK. Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. Do you, Mr. White?

Mr. WHITE. I do, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. Do you, Mr. Ritch?

Mr. RITCH. Yes, sir, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. And do you know of any matters which you may or may not have disclosed that might place you in a conflict of interest if you are confirmed?

Do you, Mr. Renick?

Mr. RENICK. I do not, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. Do you, Mr. White?

Mr. WHITE. I do not, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. Do you, Mr. Ritch?

Mr. RITCH. No, sir, I do not.

Senator MARKEY. We thank each of you for that.

Now I turn to Senator Inhofe for his first round of questions.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

So that people know what is going on here, this happens every once in a while, when they start, and we will keep the meeting going. So we will kind of go back and forth in that manner. It has worked now for 200 years, so it will work today.

First of all, I would say to all nominees is you know one of the Tennessee Valley Authority's main responsibilities is to ensure energy security to the Federal facilities that provide power to over 10 million people living in the southeast region of the United States. In 2019, the Tennessee Valley Authority became the first utility in the Nation to receive an early site permit from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission to license small modular reactors at the Clinch

River nuclear site in Oakridge, Tennessee. Energy security leads to electric grid reliability, and Americans must continue to have grid reliability in the future.

So I would say to all three of you, do you believe that the nuclear should continue to be part of the power mix at the Tennessee Valley Authority, and would you agree that nuclear is vital to keeping the lights on and ensuring grid resilience?

Starting with you, Mr. Renick.

Mr. RENICK. Thank you, Senator. I do believe that there must be a mix of fuel to energize our grid. Nuclear needs to be a part of that.

I do also believe that America has the ability and the technology to produce safe, clean nuclear, along with other fuels.

Senator INHOFE. Very good. Thank you.

Mr. White.

Mr. WHITE. Thank you, Senator. I have read about the SMRs that you are talking about in Clinch River. I am fascinated by the thought of the new technologies that are coming our way. It is something that I think TVA has the chance to be at the forefront of leading that and learning new ways and seeing how we can become more efficient.

I know they have done some updates recently at some of the nuclear sites now, which has dramatically increased the ability to produce electricity. So yes, I see nuclear as a strong part of what we do in the future.

Senator INHOFE. Thank you.

Mr. Ritch.

Mr. RITCH. Yes, and thank you for the question. Advanced nuclear projects I think are critical to the future of TVA and the security necessary for our grid. So yes, I do agree.

Senator INHOFE. All right, thank you very much. And I would say to the three of you, as you know, the Tennessee Valley Authority has announced plans to close both units of the Cumberland, Tennessee, coal powered plant, which generates enough electricity each year to power 1.1 million homes. Considering the coal plant's significant power output, in April 2022, the TVA announced its preferred replacement for the first unit to be a natural gas powered plant. Despite the economical and timely environmental benefits that natural gas provides, this decision upset many climate alarmists who oppose any fossil fuel generation.

So I would say to all nominees, do you agree that the Tennessee Valley Authority's leading priority when deciding to replace any existing power plant should be ensuring that customers continue to receive reliable and low cost electricity?

Yes, sir.

Mr. RENICK. Thank you, Senator. I do believe strongly in the Tennessee Valley mission of providing low cost, safe, reliable energy. I think back to those small companies like TCI in my hometown. They must have reliable energy in order to produce livelihoods for the people that work there. I am a big believer in the mix. I can only commit to you that I will study this as much as I possibly can, try to make decisions based on facts, but also using that common sense that has served me well.

Senator INHOFE. Yes. There is no rule that you can't use common sense, in spite of some people who have tried. And I appreciate your comments very much on that.

You are dealing with something here that is, it is life threatening. This is not a little deal. This is important. This is our ability to compete in the real world. You folks are in a very good position, and you have excellent backgrounds, all three of you, in pursuing this effort here.

I would ask the same question of Mr. White.

Mr. WHITE. Thank you, Senator. I am looking at it from the outside. I am not privy to all the information that has been provided to previous boards. But I can tell you this, that when I go to looking at how is our mix going to be, one thing I have noticed is they plan out 10, 20 years in advance. So we have to take into consideration everything, things from your staff, hopefully, that you will provide us, TVA, all the different things that we have to look at.

So I don't come into this with an agenda. But I want to make sure that we are providing the lowest cost possible, and it is clean, and it is reliable, and it is resilient, and it is sustainable. When I match those things up, we can use our common sense that we were talking about.

Senator INHOFE. I think that includes common sense. It is a good statement. I appreciate that.

You have to keep in mind what this is really for. Also you touched on something there I think, Mr. White, that is significant, and that is this is, there may be things that are popular today, and maybe those same things won't be quite as popular 6 months from now. Nonetheless, the mission goes on. And you have to keep providing. While some things will become popular and unpopular to different Administrations, your mission is obvious: You have to keep pumping out there so people know that they are going to be able to live their lives. That is all.

Yes, sir, Mr. Ritch.

Mr. RITCH. Thank you, sir, for the question.

The closing of the coal plants in the history of my time on the board is because they are obsolete. So the need for replacement power is obviously there.

So yes, I think we have to look at all types and forms of generation of electricity because of our need to make sure we have that reliable, safe, clean process in place. So I think the main thing for TVA is always to evaluate the options and make sure we are making the best case. And as directors, we look at that, as was said, in a practical sense but also in a way that reflects the mission of TVA.

Senator INHOFE. I think also the recognition that times change and priorities change. And we have to have that common sense that was referred to by Mr. Renick available to us at all times.

All right, we have a vote that is taking place right now. If something should happen that there is a delay in Senator Markey getting back, I am going to have to go over and cast my vote. It is one of the things that I was elected to do, and I have to keep it up.

I appreciate very much your answers.

We will recess the Chair.

[Recess.]

Senator MARKEY. The Subcommittee will reconvene. We thank everyone for their indulgence. We have little control over when the roll calls on the floor are called. So we thank each of you.

Let me begin my own questioning by first making a statement, then asking some questions. In the United States, the average cost, including building and operation cost, for new solar and wind generation in 2021 was \$36 and \$38 per megawatt hour, respectively. Again, that is for solar, \$36, and wind, \$38 per megawatt hour.

In contrast, the comparable cost for some of the most efficient natural gas generation was \$60 for a megawatt hour, and the coal generation was \$108 for a megawatt hour. Let's go back over those numbers again: \$36 for solar, \$38 for wind, \$60 for natural gas, and \$108 for coal. So for coal, it is triple the cost of solar and nearly triple that of wind.

Fossil fuel costs have spiked after the Russian invasion of Ukraine. And since their price is set on a global market, these hikes and disruptions are likely to continue. On the other hand, renewables have remained reliable and affordable.

As highlighted in the TVA's recent financial report, natural gas prices increased 141 percent in June compared to last year, and coal prices also soared. While the TVA supply of zero carbon energy helped keep costs down, TVA is falling alarmingly behind the rest of the country in adopting renewable energy into its grid.

Mr. Renick, do you believe that investment in low cost renewable energy can help the TVA bring down consumer costs all while supporting grid resilience and our climate and environmental goals?

Mr. RENICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I do believe that Tennessee Valley Authority, being the largest public utility in the country, should be a leader in searching for renewable energy. I do believe that renewable energy can possibly bring down the cost of electricity.

Senator MARKEY. In addition to bringing down energy costs for consumers, increasing the percentage of renewable energy in the TVA power mix can also attract new businesses to the Tennessee Valley.

Mr. Ritch, do you agree that increasing the proportion of renewables in the TVA power mix could help draw more companies to the region?

Mr. RITCH. I do, Mr. Chairman.

Senator MARKEY. Companies like Google, and other tech companies, they like to have all renewables in terms of their plants' operation. Do you agree that there might be actually additional economic benefits, for example, in drawing these companies to the cleanest and cheapest and most reliable megawatt of energy, simultaneously reducing dramatically the greenhouse gases?

Mr. RITCH. I do believe that, Mr. Chairman. I believe that Tennessee Valley Authority should pursue all of those opportunities. As I have stated, economic development is my background and my passion. And meeting the needs and the requirements of companies that could come into the Tennessee Valley region, renewables will play a major part in that. I do believe that.

Senator MARKEY. Mr. Ritch, could you answer those same questions about the role of wind and solar and the jobs it might draw,

the reduction in the cost actually per kilowatt hour, per megawatt hour, in installing new equipment?

Mr. RITCH. Yes, sir, thank you for the question. TVA has said as a leader, it should be a leader in any kind of technology in improving the cost, the megawatt cost. I think that is something that is in the current plan of TVA. But as you asked the question, as it relates to the job situation, I definitely think companies respond to that, and they are putting that as a requirement before they will consider locating somewhere, that there be a significant amount of renewable power. We have seen that in the case of several situations in particular.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you. TVA has the worst efficiency record among all utilities in the southeast, achieving only 1 percent in efficiency savings per year. It is the worst in the entire region.

To all the nominees here today, if confirmed, will you support energy efficiency programs that exceed this 1 percent per year in efficiency savings so that there can be more energy saved?

Mr. White.

Mr. WHITE. Absolutely. Always looking for ways to keep things efficient.

Senator MARKEY. Yes. My mother always said she was going to donate my brain to Harvard Medical School as a completely unused human organ. She said that because, she said, Eddie, you just have to learn how to work smarter and not harder. And that is energy efficiency in a nutshell. That is just working smarter.

A lot of people want to build more facilities, but if you don't need them, it is not a megawatt, it is a nega-watt. Just a nega-watt, we never needed it. It just a savings. So that is pretty much from my perspective what we really need to focus upon more.

Given the reliability, cost savings, and climate benefits that renewable energy brings to consumers, it is shocking to me that only 3 percent of TVA's electricity is generated from solar and from wind. As I said earlier in my opening statement, in Massachusetts, which is neither particularly windy nor sunny, 21 percent of our electricity is generated from wind and solar. That seems astoundingly high, doesn't it, that Massachusetts is 21 percent wind and solar? We are just getting started, by the way. Our goal is to go to 30, 40, 50, and more percent. We just shouldn't be that far ahead of all these States that you represent, which are much more sunny than we are.

So if the rainy day Bay State can figure this out, I would hope that each of you as you serve on the TVA are able to get those same benefits for your consumers.

Mr. Ritch, as someone who has experience on the TVA board, do you think the TVA could do more to prioritize renewable and affordable energy resources, including rooftop solar and energy efficiency in its planning?

Mr. Ritch.

Mr. RITCH. Yes, sir, I think energy efficiency and all those different options you mentioned are extremely important to the future of TVA and should be reviewed. And as a board member, I assure you that I will look into that and get back to you as to whether or not we are taking advantage of all the opportunities that are available.

Senator MARKEY. Mr. White, Mr. Renick, same question.

Mr. WHITE. I appreciate the question, Mr. Chairman. One of the things that struck me when you were talking back on solar, the way I understand it, looking in from the outside, I am not privy to all the information, but they have a plan right now for about 10,000 megawatts of solar. And when I was watching the board meeting the other day, they were talking about how they are moving forward to this but they can't get the equipment. It can't be installed.

I understand that; I am from Lyon County, we have an 800 acre one that was supposed to go in this year. We are way behind on that. So that is going to be something that I want to learn more about, why we can't move forward. Is it simply because of the backup that everybody is experiencing throughout the country?

Another thing that you brought up earlier about businesses, I think businesses are pushing for renewables just as much as anyone. That is one thing that TVA is doing with the Green Invest. The city of Knoxville, in Kentucky, they worked with Corvette, Ford, all these are requiring or requesting the ability to have renewables. With Green Invest, that is what they are doing. I think it is a great idea.

Senator MARKEY. Yes. And in Georgia, a Korean company is going to come in, they are already there, and they are going to expand and expand and expand and expand and expand their solar component part capacity to a point where they will be able to produce components that are upwards of 15,000 megawatts of equivalent per year.

So they are kind of anticipating it, and Georgia is right down there, similarly situated in terms of the ability to use this equipment in all the TVA States.

Again, ultimately, long run, we just have to break this dependence upon oil and natural gas. We can see how the prices are skyrocketing for families. Some of the poorest, lowest income families in America live in the TVA region. So they become subject to crazy price hikes that are caused in this case, in this instance, because of the Ukrainian war. What does that have to do with someone who is a low income resident of the TVA region, when the sun and the solar is going to be there independent of any foreign power in the years ahead? So just moving in that direction I think makes a lot of sense.

The Biden administration has already called for a zero carbon electricity grid by 2035. And it is deeply discouraging that the TVA, the Nation's largest public power provider, does not intend to achieve net zero carbon emissions until 2050. On top of that, TVA has even implemented rate spikes to discourage consumers from using rooftop solar. Instead of replacing its largest coal plant with a low cost zero carbon energy source, TVA has instead proposed building a new natural gas plant that it plans to run for years to come.

TVA is putting up blockades for clean, cheap energy, while rolling out the red carpet for polluting facilities that are going to blow through our clean electricity targets. Because of all the nuclear that is already in the TVA region, you have a big lead toward meeting President Biden's goals by 2035. Instead, you are moving

in a different direction. Again, nuclear gives you a baseload capacity. You don't have the excuse that other regions might have to need some additional natural gas to provide baseload. You already have that with the nuclear.

So it just doesn't make any sense. From wildfires to floods, the Tennessee Valley region is deeply affected by the climate crisis. Climate change has already threatened economic development and the environment and reliable energy production in the region.

It is real, it is caused by human activity, and it is something that you could really lead on. My father always said, Eddie, try to start out where you are going to be forced to wind up anyway, because it is prettier that way.

So I would just say to you, try to start out looking at where you are going to be in 10 years anyway. You will be surrounded by everyone who has surpassed you when you had a running head start to be the leader. It just will not be a good legacy to look back up on if you had the technological capacity to move forward.

So to all the nominees here today, do you agree that climate change threatens the Tennessee Valley region? Do you all agree with that?

Mr. Ritch.

Mr. RITCH. Yes, I agree.

Mr. WHITE. Senator, since I became a judge 12 years ago, 2 years before that we received a 100 year ice storm. Since then, I have had two 100 year floods in my county, which has had a tornado cut through in December that destroyed a lot of the homes in our county. So I have seen climate change.

Senator MARKEY. Is that a yes?

Mr. WHITE. Yes, sir.

Senator MARKEY. OK, thank you.

And Mr. Renick.

Mr. RENICK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yes, I do believe that climate change is taking place.

Senator MARKEY. OK. Do you believe that we should be adopting strong renewable energy targets, Mr. Renick?

Mr. RENICK. I think, Mr. Chairman, that the TVA should be a leader in seeking out solutions to these problems in efficiency, not only at the generation of electric power, but also at the user end of efficiency. I think Tennessee Valley Authority should be a leader in supporting weatherization programs for the consumer, along with the renewable support that they should be leading in in the generation of electricity at the front end.

Senator MARKEY. Mr. White, Mr. Ritch, we will each allow you to answer, then I can recognize Senator Whitehouse for his questions.

Mr. White.

Mr. WHITE. Thank you, sir. Everything is on the table for me. I want to see all the information that TVA has, I want to see all the information that you would be willing to provide. Any time there is something before us that you can provide, I would love to see that, and I will work with you the best I can.

Senator MARKEY. All right.

Mr. Ritch.

Mr. RITCH. Yes, sir, I agree. I think that that is one of the issues we need to continue to address. I think the TVA has an obligation as one of the leaders in innovation and should be addressing that issue. So yes, sir, I agree.

Senator MARKEY. Great, thank you.

Senator Whitehouse.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Thank you, Chairman.

Welcome, it is good to be in touch with all of you again. You look pretty good in 3-D. Last time I saw you, you were a 1 inch by 1 inch square on a Zoom screen. It is nice to have you here in person.

I would like to ask each of you the same question, which aligns with the questions that Senator Markey has been asking you. We are seeing really dramatic climate consequences playing out. We have had huge companies like Cargill talk about massive drops in midwestern grain production as a result of climate change. We have had firefighters fighting wildfires in seasons where it was never a thing before, and it is months outside of traditional fire season. We have seen astonishing ocean warming and acidification, which isn't a big TVA thing. You guys aren't very near the coast. But for those of us who are costal, it is a big deal, as particularly folks who are in the aquaculture industry find their entire crop killed off by acidified oceans that degrade and erode the shells of the oyster spat and clams and so forth that they are trying to grow.

Over and over again, there is almost no place in America right now that isn't being immediately touched by adverse consequences of climate change. It is hitting people hard in their pocketbooks. It is about a \$5,000 per family cost, and that is a lot. And a lot of it comes from power plants, and TVA runs power plants. You even have plans to build a new natural gas plant.

So what specifically can each of you tell me about your decarbonization goals as a board member of TVA? Let me start with Mr. Renick, and then go right across, Mr. White, and then Mr. Ritch.

Mr. RENICK. Thank you, Senator, for that question. If I am confirmed to this board, I am going to do everything that I possibly can to educate myself to the point that I will know how to make sound decisions. I do believe, having seen just in this past summer, many days of over 100 degree temperatures in Mississippi, which led to a major problem for the consumer, and I believe that the TVA should be a leader in searching out those renewable energies so that we can address those climate changes that we know are occurring.

It is not only a consumer issue; it is a humanitarian issue, and I take it very seriously.

Mr. WHITE. Thank you, Senator. Obviously, renewables are going to be a part of the mix. It is coming; it is being pushed by even the companies that come into the TVA valley. So it is going to be part of that.

The amount the mix is going to be and how much we are going to do over the course of a few years or a lot of years is something that I am completely open to. I look forward to working not only with TVA but also with you, with your office, with your staff, to learn the things that you know. I want to know what you know about these things, and make sure that we make the right decision.

One thing I have learned watching the TVA board meetings, reading material, is the decisions that we are going to make now are going to impact what they are able to do in 20 years. So I know that is a serious thing. We have to consider everything. Everything must be on the table. I look forward to doing that if confirmed.

Mr. RITCH. Thank you, sir. I think one of the things, because it is such a complicated issue, that we have an obligation to study, reevaluate and look at the plans at TVA once we are confirmed and be able to get back with you on some of the questions that were raised. It is critical to us and the country that we do this right.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. And right includes decarbonizing the mix, as fast as prudently feasible, correct? Doing this right includes decarbonizing your energy mix as rapidly as is prudently feasible, correct?

Mr. RITCH. Yes, sir, as rapidly as feasible. Yes, sir, I agree with that.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Yes. Let me just say one last thing, and then I will let you go. I don't need you to respond, because I don't want to be pulling any surprises. But for many years, particularly from 2001 to 2019, the TVA paid a group called the Utility Air Regulatory Group, which was an anti-climate industry lobbying group that opposed clean air regulations, opposed climate legislation, climate regulations. They were a hostile force in the efforts to solve this problem.

They had enough of a credibility crash, I suspect, that they disbanded in 2019. But lawyers who were a part of that UARG program continued to be supported and paid by TVA.

So I will be continuing to pursue whether the way in which TVA funds its influence operation is aligned with the kind of values we have been talking about today. Unfortunately, I live in a world in which, forget TVA, big American companies, banks, insurance companies, retail companies, talk with one side of their mouths about climate change to the public, to their shareholders, to consumers, but then they come here to this building and their lobby groups are either AWOL or hostile to the very ideas that those companies are claiming to espouse to those other audiences.

That has to be cleared up. It is really bad for a company to be caught speaking out of both sides of its mouth on an important public issue. And I think TVA needs to have credibility and integrity in the way it deals with its customers and the way it deals with Congress and our support for you.

I think it is really important that you make sure as board members that what you are saying and what your values are are actually the ones that are being broadcast through the influence operation that TVA funds.

I commend that thought to you as you begin service. We are certainly going to continue to look at that.

Thank you.

Senator MARKEY. I thank the Senator from Rhode Island very much.

There are no other members who have joined us today, so we thank all of our witnesses.

I think what you are hearing from Senator Whitehouse and from myself is just kind of a frustration with TVA, real frustration. You

guys figure out nuclear power plants, brag about it, but energy efficiency, wind and solar, eludes the scientists, eludes the management of the TVA. It is kind of disgusting, actually, at a certain level.

So when you say you want all of the above, what we want TVA to stand for is total voltage access for every energy source, wind and solar, and energy efficiency. We haven't been seeing it. At 3 percent, it just hasn't happened.

So before we adjourn, some housekeeping. I would like to ask unanimous consent to submit for the record a variety of materials that include letters from stakeholders and other materials that relate to today's nomination hearing.

[The referenced information was not received at time of print.]

Senator MARKEY. Senators will be allowed to submit written questions for the record through the close of business on Friday, September 9th. We will compile those questions, send them to our witnesses, and then would ask each of you to give us the answers by Wednesday, September 14th. We will get you the questions by the end of this week.

We thank each of you for your willingness to serve. We are looking forward to working with you in the years ahead to make sure that TVA is the cutting edge for the planet in terms of their technological advancement.

We thank you all so much.

With that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:48, the hearing was adjourned.]

