

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to executive session for the en bloc consideration of the following nominations: Executive Calendar Nos. 155, 261, and 469.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the nominations en bloc.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nominations of Adam J. Sullivan, of Iowa, to be an Assistant Secretary of Transportation; Ronald L. Batory, of New Jersey, to be Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration; and Raymond Martinez, of New Jersey, to be Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

Thereupon, the Senate proceeded to consider the nominations en bloc.

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate vote on the nominations en bloc with no intervening action or debate; that if confirmed, the motions to consider be considered made and laid upon the table en bloc; that the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action; that no further motions be in order; and that any statements relating to the nominations be printed in the RECORD.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Sullivan, Batory, and Martinez nominations en bloc?

The nominations were confirmed en bloc.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate resume legislative session for a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO KELLY McCUTCHEN

• Mr. ISAKSON. Mr. President, today I am proud to honor in the RECORD a dedicated Georgian who has devoted his life's work to our State.

Mr. Kelly McCutchen has spent the last 25 years of his career guiding the direction of one of Georgia's respected think tanks, the Georgia Public Policy Foundation. Most recently, Kelly served as CEO of the organization. Prior to taking the helm in 2010, he

was the organization's vice president, and he remains as a member of its board of trustees.

At the Georgia Public Policy Foundation, Kelly helped create the Civic Renewal Project that highlights the work of outstanding community-based organizations, the No Excuses program to recognize and study high-achieving, high-poverty public schools, and the foundation's award-winning statewide report cards on education, crime, and taxes.

In January 2018, the foundation was named one of the best independent think tanks in the 2017 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report. During his tenure, the foundation was also named No. 1 for "highest integrity" and No. 3 for "most knowledgeable among business organizations or State associations in Georgia" by James magazine in 2004.

A proud third-generation high honors graduate of the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta, Kelly has also served on the Georgia Tech Alumni Association. He is a founder and served as governing board chair of Tech High, a math, science, and technology focused public charter school in Atlanta.

At the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, Kelly served on the education policy committee and the healthcare policy committee.

He chaired the board of the Healthcare Institute for Neuro-Recovery and Innovation Foundation and has also served on the Georgia Science and Technology Executive Committee and on the public policy committee for Metro Atlanta United Way. In addition, he is a policy adviser for the Technology Association of Georgia.

His service to our State has also been seen on the boards of Leadership Georgia and the Conservative Policy Leadership Institute.

Of particular significance to me as chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, Kelly cofounded the Georgia Warrior Alliance, a nonprofit with the mission to make Georgia the national leader in programs supporting military veterans and their families.

Kelly's wife, Mary Kay Davis McCutchen, has been a dedicated companion and chief supporter of his work and civic engagement. Their son Kelly and daughter Caroline are college students who have wonderful role models to follow in their very special parents.

Kelly McCutchen is a Georgian whom I am proud to know and to call a friend. I applaud his service and wish him the very best as he continues his service to our State in his new role as executive director of the High Impact Network of Responsible Innovators. •

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Ms. Ridgway, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As in executive session the Presiding Officer laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The messages received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 6:10 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mrs. Cole, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

S. 96. An act to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to ensure the integrity of voice communications and to prevent unjust or unreasonable discrimination among areas of the United States in the delivery of such communications.

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, and were referred as indicated:

EC-4326. A communication from the Congressional Review Coordinator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Department of Agriculture, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Standardizing Phytosanitary Treatment Regulations: Approval of Cold Treatment and Irradiation Facilities; Cold Treatment Schedules; Establishment of Fumigation and Cold Treatment Compliance Agreements" (RIN0579-AD90) received in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 12, 2018; to the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry.

EC-4327. A communication from the Senior Official performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Defense (Research and Engineering), transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to activities under the Secretary of Defense Personnel Management Demonstration Project authorities for Department of Defense Science and Technology Reinvention Laboratories (STRs) for calendar year 2017; to the Committee on Armed Services.

EC-4328. A communication from the Director, Office of Management and Budget, Executive Office of the President, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report relative to the President's fiscal year 2019 budget request; to the Committee on the Budget.

EC-4329. A communication from the Secretary of the Interior, transmitting proposed legislation entitled "Reclamation Title Transfer Act of 2018"; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

EC-4330. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Final Authorization of State Hazardous Waste Management Program Revision" (FRL No. 9974-25-Region 5) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4331. A communication from the Director of the Regulatory Management Division, Environmental Protection Agency, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Approval and Promulgation of Air

Quality Implementation Plans; Arkansas; Infrastructure State Implementation Plan Requirements for the National Ambient Air Quality Standards" (FRL No. 9973-23-Region 6) received during adjournment of the Senate in the Office of the President of the Senate on February 9, 2018; to the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

EC-4332. A communication from the Secretary of Education, transmitting, pursuant to law, the report of a rule entitled "Student Assistance General Provisions, Federal Perkins Loan Program, Federal Family Education Loan Program, William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program, and Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grant Programs" (RIN1840-AD28) received in the Office of the President pro tempore of the Senate; to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions.

EC-4333. A communication from the Acting Chief Financial Officer, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report entitled "U.S. Department of Homeland Security Annual Performance Report for Fiscal Years 2017-2019"; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4334. A communication from the Director, Office of Government Ethics, transmitting, pursuant to law, the Office's Strategic Plan for fiscal years 2018-2022, the Congressional Budget Justification and Annual Performance Plan for fiscal year 2019, and the Annual Performance Report for fiscal year 2017; to the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs.

EC-4335. A communication from the Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, Department of Homeland Security, transmitting proposed legislation; to the Committee on the Judiciary.

PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS

The following petitions and memorials were laid before the Senate and were referred or ordered to lie on the table as indicated:

POM-167. A resolution adopted by the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania memorializing its support of the Department of Energy's proposed Grid Resiliency Pricing Rule; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 576

Whereas, Electric generation power plants in this Commonwealth that participate in the wholesale electric markets strengthen competition and enhance the resilience and reliability of the bulk power and transmission systems and are vital to the public interest; and

Whereas, The nation's and this Commonwealth's economy, environment and security depend on a reliable, resilient electric grid powered by an "all of the above" mix of energy generation resources, including traditional baseload generation that is produced from long-term fuel sources located onsite; and

Whereas, The North American Electric Reliability Corporation, whose mission is to assure the reliability and security of North America's bulk power system, in a May 2017 letter to United States Secretary of Energy Rick Perry warned that "premature retirements of fuel-secure baseload generating stations reduces resilience to fuel supply disruptions"; and

Whereas, The recent United States Department of Energy Staff Report to the Secretary on Electricity Markets and Reliability made clear that resiliency must be addressed by the Federal Energy Regulatory

Commission (FERC) and there is an "urgent need for clear definitions of reliability- and resilience-enhancing attributes and should quickly establish the market means to value or the regulatory means to provide them"; and

Whereas, The 2014 polar vortex exposed problems with the resiliency of the electric grid when PJM Interconnection struggled to meet demand for electricity because a significant amount of generation was not available to run due to weather-related outages; and

Whereas, Pennsylvania's fuel-secure baseload generation plants employ thousands of workers in high-paying jobs and contribute significantly to State and local economies; and

Whereas, Pennsylvania's coal industry, including coal power plants, is a vital contributor to the State's economy, providing support through direct, indirect and induced impacts, including approximately 36,100 full and part-time jobs, and \$4.1 billion in total value added to the Commonwealth's economy; and

Whereas, Pennsylvania's nuclear industry, including nuclear power plants, is a vital contributor to the State's economy, providing support through direct, indirect and induced impacts, including approximately 15,900 in-State full time jobs and \$2 billion to the Commonwealth's gross domestic product, and \$69 million in net State tax revenues annually; and

Whereas, In addition to the reliability, security, grid resilience and economic attributes, Pennsylvania's fuel-secure baseload coal plants have made significant investments to meet increased environmental standards, helping to improve air and water quality in the Commonwealth; and

Whereas, Pennsylvania is also home to unique fuel-secure coal generation sources that use waste coal as a fuel-source, employing 3,800 Pennsylvania residents and producing 1,500 megawatts of renewable energy, also helping to remove approximately 200 million tons of refuse coal from mine scarred land in Pennsylvania; and

Whereas, In addition to the reliability, security, grid resilience and economic attributes, Pennsylvania's fuel-secure baseload nuclear power plants also provide more than 93% of this Commonwealth's emissions-free electricity and are the only emissions-free, predictable and reliable electric generation source; and

Whereas, Pennsylvania's diverse portfolio of fuel-secure baseload generation resources are vital to our Commonwealth's economic competitiveness, natural environment and public health and safety; and

Whereas, It is in the public interest that fuel-secure baseload generation resources be properly compensated for providing these positive attributes and under the current design of the wholesale electric markets, prices are set in a manner that undervalues fuel-secure generation resources; and

Whereas, The Secretary of Energy has proposed, for consideration by FERC, a Grid Resiliency Pricing Rule with the goal of ensuring our nation's energy security: Therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania acknowledge the grid resilience and reliability benefits that fuel-secure baseload electricity generation resources provide to the residents, businesses and economy of this Commonwealth and assert that fuel-secure baseload generation resources receive proper compensation for these positive attributes; and be it further

Resolved, That the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania agree with the goals of the United States De-

partment of Energy's proposed Grid Resiliency Pricing Rule and urge the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to swiftly implement policies and approve tariff provisions to ensure fuel-secure baseload electricity generation resources receive proper compensation for all of the positive attributes they provide our nation's and this Commonwealth's electric system; and be it further

Resolved, That the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, while expressing support for FERC's swift action to ensure the positive attributes provided by fuel-secure baseload generation resources receive proper compensation in the wholesale market, will continue to exercise the General Assembly's authority to make energy policy consistent with the health, safety and welfare of our residents; and be it further

Resolved, That copies of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, United States Secretary of Energy Rick Perry, FERC Commissioners, the presiding officers of each house of Congress, each member of Congress from Pennsylvania and the Board of Managers of PJM Interconnection.

POM-168. A concurrent resolution adopted by the Legislative Assembly of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico requesting the United States Congress and the United States Department of the Interior to take necessary actions to provide for the updating of the various topographic and hydrographic maps of Puerto Rico; to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

S. CON. RES. 1

STATEMENT OF MOTIVES

The United States Geological Survey (hereinafter, the USGS) is a scientific organization that provides unbiased information on the health of our ecosystems and the environment; the natural hazards that threaten us; the natural resources, based on the impact of climate change and land use; and the core science systems that allow us to provide timely, relevant, and useful information.

As the Nation's largest water, earth, and biological science mapping agency, the USGS collects, monitors, analyzes, and provides scientific knowledge on the condition of the natural resources and any problems and issues related thereto. The agency's diverse scientific knowledge enables it to conduct large-scale multidisciplinary investigation, and to provide unbiased scientific information to resource managers, planners, and other customers. Likewise, the USGS works in conjunction with other federal agencies as well as the private sector through official memoranda of understanding and memoranda of agreement in order to fulfill the agency's scientific mission.

The services offered by the USGS are of utmost importance for Puerto Rico. The maps drawn by this entity are used for multiple purposes, such as the identification of drainage basins and the topography, land classification, localization, and the location of water resources, properties, delimitation, etc.

As a matter of fact, the USGS's plans are part of the requirements of the permit process carried out by the government agencies of Puerto Rico. However, the aforementioned maps are not up to date and most of them date back to many decades. As expected, our Island and its topography have been altered in the last forty (40) or fifty (50) years; therefore, it is necessary to amend and update said maps.

The USGS keeps evolving and, in 2010, the agency made changes to its structure in order to focus on or pay special attention to