

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
April 30, 2025 Hearing: *The Travnicek, Beyer, Garrish, and Abbey Nominations*
Questions for the Record Submitted to Mr. Theodore Garrish

Questions for the Record from Ranking Member Martin Heinrich

Question 1: The Department of Energy’s Loan Program Office has been an integral component of our nuclear energy supply. Most recently, LPO has provided a loan to Vogtle to support the first deployment in the U.S. of the AP1000 Generation III+ reactor and has also provided up to \$1.52 billion to Holtec to restart the Palisades Nuclear Plant.

Do you think the Loan Programs Office is essential to the success of the U.S. nuclear industry?

Response: Yes. LPO has been very important in previous nuclear financing such as the Vogtle plant financing and will be equally helpful for future nuclear plants going forward.

Question 2: The Government Accountability Office plays a vital role in making sure agencies are implementing the law as passed by Congress and ensuring American’s taxpayer dollars are being used the way Congress said they should.

In order for GAO to do its job, it needs cooperation from agencies in responding to their oversight work in a timely manner.

If confirmed, will you commit to be responsive to GAO’s outreach and requests for information without delay?

Response: I commit to be responsive to GAO in a timely manner.

Question 3: High-Assay, Low-Enriched Uranium (HALEU) is essential for many defense and advanced civilian reactors. I’m glad the Department is finally acting—but I worry we’re moving too slowly to meet the moment. Despite five laws and \$3.4 billion in funding to jumpstart a domestic supply, Russia remains the only commercial source.

- If confirmed, what specific actions will you take to prioritize expeditiously standing up our domestic HALEU supply?
- Would you consider disbursing the funding for the nuclear fuel availability program as cost-share awards in lieu of the federal government acting as a nuclear fuel bank for both HALEU and low-enriched uranium?

Response: Domestic enrichment of both HALEU and LEU will be one of my top priorities. I will immediately evaluate the current system for contract awards of domestic enrichment and determine whether additional actions are required. This could involve several different actions, and I would be pleased to consider the idea described above and ask for more information regarding the proposal. If confirmed, I will reach out to your staff to learn more about the idea to give it proper consideration.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
April 30, 2025 Hearing: *The Travnicek, Beyer, Garrish, and Abbey Nominations*
Questions for the Record Submitted to Mr. Theodore Garrish

Question 4: The Office of Nuclear Energy has not been exempted from the Department-wide hiring freeze or workforce reduction efforts by the so-called Department of Government Efficiency.

If confirmed, will you commit to maintaining the workforce necessary to effectively carry out the mission of the Office of Nuclear Energy?

Response: If confirmed I will work to ensure we meet the demand of the Office of Nuclear Energy.

Question 5: The federal government is responsible for the final disposition of nuclear waste, a responsibility which we all know has gone unfulfilled for decades. Recent efforts of the Office of Nuclear Energy have been focused on consolidated interim storage. Without a permanent repository, these “interim” facilities would fill that role by default over time.

Will you commit to maintaining a federal capability at the National Laboratories in long-term repository science to ensure the government upholds its legal responsibility to permanently dispose of nuclear waste?

Response: Yes. If confirmed, it will be important to have the R&D capability to fully understand the technical requirements necessary for the government to ultimately dispose of the waste from both the existing fleet of commercial reactors and advanced reactors.

Question 6: Federal funding for building a future nuclear workforce is incredibly important. This funding is provided primarily through DOE’s Nuclear Energy University Program. There have been reports that this funding has been delayed several weeks with no notice of award or decision, which has greatly impacted the students and faculty who contribute to the workforce.

Will you commit to ensuring funding for Fiscal Year 2024 and the following years is not delayed?

Response: If confirmed, I will look into this issue.

Question 7: Last year, every member of Congress voted to pass a ban on imports of Russian uranium in efforts to stop funding Putin’s unlawful war against Ukraine. Unfortunately, we may be seeing the Chinese and Russian governments attempting to circumvent this ban by routing Russian uranium through China to the United States.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to address this issue?

Response: If confirmed, I will ensure that we closely monitor and restrict the imports of enriched uranium from Russia as well as potential circumvention through China and continue to fully implement the provisions of the *Prohibiting Russian Uranium Imports Act* as passed by Congress. Most importantly, I will work to significantly accelerate the domestic production of uranium enrichment in the United States.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
April 30, 2025 Hearing: *The Travnicek, Beyer, Garrish, and Abbey Nominations*
Questions for the Record Submitted to Mr. Theodore Garrish

Questions for the Record from Senator Steve Daines

Question 1: Mr. Garrish, will you commit to working with states and state public service commissioners to advance and build innovative nuclear power solutions like small modular reactors, microreactors, and fuel recycling?

Response: Yes. If confirmed, I will ensure that the Nuclear Energy Office works proactively with state officials, energy offices and public utility commissioners as we develop new and innovative reactors and new approaches to recycling. As a part of this effort, I will ensure that the nuclear energy office is an active participant in NARUC activities for both new innovative approaches and existing technologies in the nuclear energy field.

Questions for the Record from Senator Catherine Cortez Masto

Question 1: As we discussed during the hearing, Energy Secretary Chris Wright provided the following QFR response during his nomination process in January 2025: “The people of Nevada are not in favor of Yucca Mountain, and thus President Trump and I do not support Yucca Mountain as a waste repository.”

Should you be confirmed, can you please reaffirm that you’ll uphold this position and oppose the Yucca Mountain project?

Response: I will support the position of President Trump and Energy Secretary Wright as expressed in the QFR.

Question 2: In your written testimony, you stated that “we need to begin to resolve the nuclear waste dilemma and work with Congress, communities and States on solutions,” and in response to my question during the hearing, you highlighted the need for a more collaborative process for the management of nuclear waste.

Can you please expand on your verbal response and explain in greater detail what a collaborative approach for a repository site-selection process means and what mechanisms you would put in place to ensure a repository could not be sited or constructed in a state that did not want it or consent to it? Can you please confirm that you would not proceed with the repository siting process if a state is opposed to the project?

Response: A collaborative approach would involve meetings and discussions with states that would consider siting the repository, and proposing benefits to the state that would include an array of facilities such as manufacturing plants for reactors with related supply chains, enrichment plants and fuel fabrication plants, research reactors, university and training facilities along with a discussion of robust financial benefits that could be made available for siting the repository and storage.

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
April 30, 2025 Hearing: *The Travnicek, Beyer, Garrish, and Abbey Nominations*
Questions for the Record Submitted to Mr. Theodore Garrish

The collaborative approach would only be taken with states and communities that were interested.

Question 3: If confirmed, will you commit to working with me, my office, and the State of Nevada on all nuclear matters, but especially those related to nuclear waste management?

Response: Yes.

Question 4: From your perspective, what are the waste implications of new advanced reactors? And how will these new waste streams affect the search for a solution to U.S. waste disposal?

Response: All of the new waste streams need to be researched and evaluated for appropriate methods of final disposition. For instance, several of the new advanced reactors burn their own waste reducing the volume and toxicity of the remaining waste product which may call for different less stringent methods of disposal.

Question 5: How would you assess the current status of U.S. workforce when it comes to research and development (R&D)? And if confirmed, how would you work to bolster R&D via programs like DOE's Training and Workforce Development Programs – even if it runs counter to Trump Administration firings and reduction in force (or RIF) plans?

Response: The status of the U.S. workforce for nuclear R&D is sufficient through the efforts of the Nuclear Energy University Program and DOE's research at the national laboratories. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that we meet the demand as advancements in nuclear energy continue.