



Committee: Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee

Event: [Full Committee Hearing to Consider Pending Nominations](#)

Date: February 25, 2026

Executive Summary:

The Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee held a hearing on February 25, 2026, to evaluate the pending nominations for positions within the Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Department of Energy (DOE), and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

- There was broad agreement that the U.S. must strengthen domestic energy production, improve permitting efficiency, and ensure reliability and affordability.
- Republicans argued that the U.S. should prioritize energy dominance, expand natural gas and critical mineral development, streamline National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other permitting processes.
- Democrats argued that public lands must be managed as long-term public trusts, with strong protections against large-scale land sales and the preservation of monuments.

Member Toplines:

Chair Mike Lee¹ (R-UT): Lee expressed his support for each of the nominees, emphasizing their experience and qualifications. Lee highlighted the urgency of confirming leaders who can strengthen U.S. mineral supply chains amid foreign adversaries expanding their control over production. He stated the importance of BLM and DOE’s roles in effective oversight of public lands and mineral estates, energy infrastructure, including electricity, nuclear energy, geothermal energy, hydrocarbons, cybersecurity, and the strategic petroleum reserve.

Ranking Member Martin Heinrich (D-NM): Heinrich expressed reservations about the BLM nominee, emphasizing that the director must manage public lands as a steward for the public and future generations, particularly amid calls to sell off federal lands. While he raised concerns and posed questions about the nominee’s approach to stewardship, he did not formally oppose the nomination.

Witness Toplines:

[Kyle Haustveit, Nominee to be Under Secretary of Energy:](#) Haustveit highlighted recent innovations in the energy industry, pointing to expanded geothermal operations in Nevada and a 500-MW project in Utah as examples of growing domestic capacity. He emphasized a need

¹ Written testimony is not available for Chair Mike Lee and Ranking Member Martin Heinrich.

to shift from energy dependence to energy dominance via strengthening partnerships with U.S. allies and aligning efforts with President Trump's energy agenda.

[Stevan Pearce, Nominee to be Director of the BLM](#): Pearce emphasized that decisions regarding public lands must continue to incorporate local input. He stressed the need to ensure clean and plentiful water, advance energy dominance, preserve natural spaces and their beauty, develop critical minerals, and protect Native American lands. He concluded that the country must balance the multiple uses of public lands responsibly.

[David LaCerte, Nominee to be Member of FERC](#): LaCerte thanked the Committee for the opportunity to serve his first term at FERC. He highlighted accomplishments since joining the Commission, including efforts to expand and improve the pipeline certification process for hydroelectric and natural gas facilities and to ensure permits are issued in a timely manner. He emphasized his commitment to representing ratepayers, prioritizing affordability and reliability, continuing to hear from all stakeholders, and upholding his duty to follow the law.

Major Takeaways:

Kyle Haustveit's Nomination:

- Sen. **John Hoeven** (R-ND) and Chair Lee praised Haustveit's diverse energy background and highlighted geothermal potential in states like Utah. They also spoke about the importance of bolstering federal research, development, and commercialization efforts.
 - Haustveit emphasized the goal of delivering cost-competitive, GW-scale geothermal power through a step-by-step approach leveraging field pilots, as well as existing oil and gas infrastructure.
- Ranking Member Heinrich and Sen. **Bill Cassidy** (R-LA) raised concerns about rising energy demand, as well as reliability and affordability needs. The Senators also discussed the need to ease permitting for transmission projects.
 - Cassidy noted that he has been told that large transmission projects can take multiple years to permit and complete.
 - Heinrich suggested that the U.S. needs an energy strategy to support the rapid expansion of production across all available sources, including renewables and storage, to maintain U.S. competitiveness in the AI race.
 - Haustveit stressed that not all energy sources are equal and that deployment should reflect regional strengths.

Stevan Pearce's Nomination:

- Sen. **Cynthia Lummis** (R-WY) strongly endorsed Pearce, calling him well-qualified for the role.

- Ranking Member Heinrich and Sen. **Ruben Gallego** (D-AZ) raised concerns about Pearce’s stance on public land sales and monument protections, including Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and the Grand Canyon.
 - Pearce said large-scale land sales are not anticipated; he also expressed support for protecting both monuments mentioned, committing to working with both Senators.
 - Heinrich also highlighted issues around “orphan wells,” an area in which Pearce offered support.
- Sen. **John Barrasso** (R-WY), **Lisa Murkowski** (R-AK), **Steve Daines** (R-MT), and **Alex Padilla** (D-CA) focused on state-specific concerns, including “longevity” and “certainty” of field offices like Wyoming. Pearce pledged to incorporate local input and work collaboratively with states.
- Pearce reiterated a commitment to balancing conservation, development, and multiple-use priorities on public lands

David LaCerte’s Nomination

- Sens. Lee and Barrasso questioned LaCerte on natural gas, liquified natural gas access, interstate pipelines, and collaboration with states. LaCerte characterized natural gas as a reliable, comparatively clean energy source that proved critical during recent extreme winter weather events.
 - He noted FERC’s approval of additional gas infrastructure and argued that states should not block projects serving other states.
 - LaCerte discussed efforts to “rightsize” NEPA implementation and streamline permitting processes.
- Sen. **Angus King** (I-ME) raised concerns about regulatory “whiplash” caused by changes in administrations. King also discussed the importance of promoting grid-enhancing technologies.