

To: Jackson, Ryan[jackson.ryan@epa.gov]
From: POLITICO Pro Energy Whiteboard
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Subject: Committee advances Interior, DOE nominees

By Esther Whieldon

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The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee today advanced five nominations for senior positions at the Interior and Energy departments.

Members of the committee gathered off the Senate floor to vote on the nominations. They approved Douglas Domenech, to be assistant secretary of insular affairs at Interior on a 13-8 vote.

Four other nominees were confirmed on voice votes: Mark Wesley Menezes, to be undersecretary of DOE; Paul Dabbar, to be DOE undersecretary for science; Brenda Burman, to lead Interior's Bureau of Reclamation; and Susan Combs, to be Interior's assistant secretary of policy management and budget. Sen. Bernie Sanders asked to be recorded as a no vote on all of the nominations.

The committee did not vote on David Jonas, for DOE's general counsel. Jonas was initially on the agenda for the markup, which had been rescheduled from last week.

Energy Chairman Lisa Murkowski said the vote on Jonas was postponed because of concerns from committee Democrats but she expects to take him up when they return.

WHAT'S NEXT: The Senate is expected to leave for its August recess as soon as today.

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