

SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
“Nominations of Ms. Susie Feliz, to be Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, Department of Commerce; and Mr. Donald Cravins, Jr., to be Under Secretary for Minority Business Development”

10:00 AM, July 14, 2022

Questions for the Record from Hon. Sinema to Ms. Feliz

Relationships with State and Local Governments. The Commerce Department’s Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs has the responsibility to maintain relationships with Congress, as well as state and local governments. This is especially important as the Department continues to implement the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program created in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which will provide states and territories \$42.45 billion over five years to expand their broadband connectivity.

Question. If confirmed, how will you work with state and local governments in Arizona to ensure that underserved areas receive broadband access? Will you commit to working with state and local governments to provide appropriate and clear guidance related to broadband deployment?

Answer: **If confirmed, I commit to working in partnership with NTIA to ensure that state and local governments receive proper guidance and a fair and equitable allocation of broadband deployment funding.**

Relationships with Tribal Governments. The Assistant Secretary position also serves as the Department of Commerce’s point of contact for tribal communities. Arizona is home to twenty-two federally recognized Native American tribes. The Department is implementing the Tribal Connectivity Program to enable more tribal communities, especially those in rural areas, to receive broadband access.

Question. Will you also commit to working with Arizona’s tribal communities to ensure that tribal governments receive proper guidance and a fair and equitable allocation of Tribal Connectivity Program funding?

Answer: **If confirmed, I commit to working in partnership with NTIA and Arizona’s tribal communities to ensure that tribal governments receive proper guidance and a fair and equitable allocation of Tribal Connectivity Program funding.**

Questions for the Record from Senator Rosen to Susie Feliz

Tourism. Ms. Feliz, my Omnibus Travel and Tourism Act with Ranking Member Wicker – which we like to call the “TourBus” – is a top priority for a broad coalition of bipartisan Senators and national organizations working to support the travel and tourism industry in the U.S. and the critically important workforce it employs. Nearly a dozen bipartisan Senators are co-sponsors of the TourBus, which passed out of this committee with unanimous support last year.

The TourBus would, among other things, coordinate federal travel and tourism policy across government by creating an assistant secretary position at the Department of Commerce, someone focused every single day on bolstering America’s travel and tourism industry and coordinating a strategy across multiple federal agencies – like the strategy I was glad to see the Department released last month and which my subcommittee held a hearing on earlier this week.

Question. Ms. Feliz, I am thrilled that Secretary Raimondo strongly supports our bill, including its provision to create an Assistant Secretary for Travel and Tourism. She has committed, before this committee and in private conversations, to working with me to help make this happen. So, if confirmed, can you also commit to working with my office and relevant committees in the Senate AND the House to pass this bipartisan legislation to support the future of the travel and tourism industry and our global competitiveness in the international travel market?

Answer: **Yes, if confirmed, I commit to working with your staff and the relevant Congressional committees on this legislation.**

NTIA Coordination and Oversight. I was proud to be part of the group of Senators that helped draft key portions of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that Congress passed last year, including the infrastructure title – which included my Middle-Mile Broadband Deployment Act; NTIA’s new Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment, or BEAD program; and key cybersecurity provisions. This \$65 billion-dollar investment is crucial for communities in Nevada, including those living in our rural communities. The pandemic highlighted the challenges families faced without access to broadband. Left out the ability to access remote work, telehealth, or government services, millions of families suffered. That is why it’s important that we make sure these dollars actually go out to our unserved and underserved communities.

Question 1. Ms. Feliz, will you commit to working with my office to ensure NTIA is following the Congressional intent of the Middle-Mile Broadband grant program, the BEAD, and the cybersecurity provisions laid out in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law?

Answer: **Yes, if confirmed, I commit to working with your office to ensure NTIA is following Congressional intent behind the Middle-Mile Broadband grant program, the BEAD, and the cybersecurity provisions laid out in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.**

Question 2. Ms. Feliz, Nevada has a significant amount of federal lands, including military bases that will require extensive coordination with DOD and the Bureau of Land Management. How will you ensure NTIA works closely with their federal counterparts to minimize delays and unnecessary red-tape in deploying broadband in Nevada?

Answer: **If confirmed, I will ensure that NTIA works closely across the Administration, including with DOD and with land-management agencies, to minimize delays and unnecessary red-tape in deploying broadband in Nevada.**