

U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Nominations Hearing on July 14, 2022
Questions for the Record – Minority

Susie Feliz, of Virginia, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs

Ranking Member Roger Wicker

Question 1: Many of NOAA’s Notices of Funding Opportunity for funds appropriated by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) include considerations of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. Not only were none of those considerations included in the BIL funding, the layering on of additional requirements often discourages historically disadvantaged groups from applying for grants.

- *Has NOAA examined how to make the grants application more accessible, rather than layering on requirements that were not included in the BIL? Did NOAA work with disadvantaged communities in developing the NOFOs and grant applications? If so, how was such feedback incorporated?*

Response: *I understand the importance of making sure diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility are considered in implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). If confirmed, I will work with NOAA to ensure this focus on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility continues in implementing BIL funding.*

Question 2: In March, President Biden and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced an agreement “in principle” to replace the invalidated EU-US Privacy Shield framework. Before the framework was struck down by the European Court of Justice in 2020, the Privacy Shield provided the legal basis for the transfer of data between the United States and the European Union. American companies, in particular small and medium-sized businesses, relied on the legal certainty provided by the Privacy Shield to conduct digital commerce across the Atlantic. In the years since, companies and consumers have lacked this certainty and have eagerly awaited a replacement framework.

- *Ms. Feliz, last Congress, this committee held a hearing on the invalidation of the EU-US Privacy Shield and its impact on the continuity of transatlantic data flows between the EU and the United States. In March, President Biden announced an agreement in principle to replace the invalidated EU-US Privacy Shield framework.*
- *The establishment of a durable and lasting data transfer framework between the United States and the EU that provides meaningful data protections to consumers, sustains the free flow of information across the Atlantic, and encourages a continued economic and strategic partnership with our European allies is very important to this Committee. Would you commit to keeping this Committee informed on any progress that is made to finalize the agreement between the United States and Europe to replace the Privacy Shield framework that was invalidated in 2020?*

Response: *Yes, if confirmed, I commit to keeping this Committee informed on any progress that is made to finalize the agreement between the United States and Europe to replace the Privacy Shield framework.*

Question 3: It has been brought to my attention that after almost three months, Department of Commerce officials have not yet submitted Secretary Gina Raimondo’s QFR responses for the Commerce Committee’s hearing held on April 27, 2022, titled, “Department of Commerce Fiscal Year 2023 Budget Priorities.”

- *In light of this situation, how will you plan to insure timely QFR responses, and other required responses, to Congress if confirmed to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs?*

Response: *If confirmed, I commit to working with the bureaus and Department-level offices to appropriately prioritize responses to Congress, while at the same time ensuring that such responses are thoughtful and responsive. I will also examine the response-drafting process to determine whether there are areas for improvement or increased efficiency.*