

Transcript Prepared by Clerk of the Legislature Transcribers Office
Natural Resources Committee February 17, 2022

BOSTELMAN: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to the Natural Resources Committee. I'm Senator Bruce Bostelman, and I'm here from Brainard, and I represent the 23rd Legislative District, serve as Chair of the committee. We have one item we're bringing up this afternoon is a confirmation of-- find my note-- of Bridget Troxel Peck for the Power Review Board. With that, we'll ask our members present to introduce themselves starting on my left.

HUGHES: Dan Hughes, District 44, eight counties in southwest Nebraska.

MOSER: Mike Moser, Platte County and parts of Stanton County.

BOSTELMAN: On my right.

J. CAVANAUGH: John Cavanaugh, District 9, midtown Omaha.

AGUILAR: Ray Aguilar, District 35, Grand Island.

BOSTELMAN: On my left is committee counsel, Cyndi Lamm, and on my right is committee clerk, Katie Bohlmeier. We have both Malcolm and Joseph here as our pages today to help us out. Since we only have the confirmation, we'll have Ms. Peck to come up to the chair. It really is informal on this, a little bit on this side of the introduction. What we would like to have and this is not our normal hearing room so it's a little further away, a little less personal, I guess. So really what we would like to have is tell us your name, we need you to spell your name. Tell us a little bit about yourself and then just tell us what your interest is with the Power Review Board and anything along those lines you'd like to share with us, please.

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: OK, thank you. My name is Bridget Troxel Peck, B-r-i-d-g-e-t T-r-o-x-e-l P-e-c-k. I live in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, and I work for Platte Valley Companies. It's a bank holding company with state charters in Nebraska, Wyoming, and Colorado. I'm the director of audit and risk management for the organization, so I have responsibility for internal audit compliance, enterprise risk management, all those types of corporate governance type things. My family, my husband, Jeff Peck, owns a company called Intralinks in Scottsbluff and Gering. It's a technical consulting company that serves the Panhandle of Nebraska as well as eastern Wyoming. And we have two children, a daughter in eighth grade and a son in fifth grade. The way that I found out, I guess, about this opportunity to serve is that our bank president is also on the, I guess, the board for the Omaha Fed. And so somebody had asked him, we need an accountant from western Nebraska. Do you know anyone? So he came to

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me. And as I thought about it, I thought about early in my career when I worked in public accounting what I liked best about it was working in audits because I would get to go and learn about an industry. That's actually where I first learned about banking, you know, which is where my career is now. But one area of audit that I really enjoyed was power companies. Until that point in my life, I'd never thought about how does electricity get where it goes? And, you know, learned about how it's distributed and sold, and that was really interesting to me. And so when this opportunity came up, it reminded me of how my interest in that was piqued so many years ago. And so I thought, you know, maybe this is the opportunity to learn more about that and, you know, get involved in the state and so just kind of went from there.

BOSTELMAN: Thank you. Thank you for coming in and especially making the trip today, that it all worked out. So Senator Hughes, the members will ask you questions now perhaps. Senator Hughes.

HUGHES: OK, thank you, Chairman Bostelman. Thank you for your willingness to serve the state. So it sounds kind of like you're filling a predetermined slot on the Power Review Board. Is that right, of a CPA?

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: Yes. My understanding is that most of the boards in the state need an accountant member, and so that's the space I'm filling.

HUGHES: OK, so one last question. So we have a bill. I'm carrying a bill for the Power Review Board to give additional funding for the members who attend meetings for the Southwest Power Pool. So what kind of arrangement have you made with your employer for the time that you're going to be spending on the Power Review Board?

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: So I-- I work for a, you know, a community bank, and so it's very important to our organization that our associates give back to the community, to the state. So they're very supportive of my taking on this role. And so I would get to count it as community time. And so I already actually have all of the days off for the rest of this year approved.

HUGHES: OK, so your-- your company is OK with you, with them, you still being on salary, but yet you are volunteering for this board, understanding that your expenses, some of your expenses will be covered by the Power Review Board.

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: Yes.

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HUGHES: OK, very good. Thank you.

BOSTELMAN: I believe you haven't had an opportunity yet to sit in one of the board meetings or hearings, have you?

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: Not in person. I viewed a couple of them via WebEx, so I've gotten a little feel of it but.

BOSTELMAN: So is there anything that strikes out from those hearings or those meetings that you've heard from so far that-- that interest you, that you can tell us?

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: I feel I have a lot to learn based on those meetings, lots of experts on that board. So I think it'll be really interesting to get more involved.

BOSTELMAN: How-- do you know how many board-- how many meetings will you have during the year?

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: 12. There's one every month.

BOSTELMAN: And they're here in Lincoln?

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: Yes, on the third Friday.

BOSTELMAN: Sure. Yeah. And so you're going to be able to-- so are those in-person or can you Zoom in, Zoom or otherwise? Do you know?

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: I think for the most part, the expectation is that I would be here in person.

BOSTELMAN: OK, sure, that's good. Senator Cavanaugh.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you, Chairman Bostelman. Thank you for being here. Is it-- is it Troxel Peck? Is that it, Troxel Peck?

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: Peck.

J. CAVANAUGH: Just Ms. Peck? Thank you for being here. Kind of on Senator Hughes's question, you say you're filling a CPA position. Is it also geographic? Are you filling a position for western Nebraska? Sort of statewide?

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: Statewide.

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J. CAVANAUGH: OK. I was just and when they said you needed-- needed an accountant from western Nebraska, I was like, wow, you're like winning the lottery on this board [INAUDIBLE].

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: Yeah, I don't know that--

J. CAVANAUGH: It fits a technical position and comes from greater Nebraska is a bonus I think. I'm not trying to malign western Nebraska. It's just sometimes it's hard to find people for these boards, for some of these positions. So thank you for your willingness to serve and-- and for being here. Just as a general question, what's your impression of what the Power Review Board's job is? And obviously you haven't actually sat on the board yet.

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: Right.

J. CAVANAUGH: Some people come and they sit on the board before they get here.

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: Yeah, like I said, I viewed a couple of meetings via WebEx. You know, we were just visiting about the fact that the way that it's structured in our state here is that there's actually a lot of local control with the power districts. And so it's-- it's less about dealing, like, with the end user and more about oversight of the actual, you know, power system, like if they're wanting to build a new facility or something like that, just overseeing that and making sure that it's structured correctly and then leaving it to those districts to actually manage.

J. CAVANAUGH: And for the CPA role is that for, I mean, obviously be keeping track of the books. Is that the Power Review Board's books, or would that be kind of auditing the actual entities themselves?

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: I think it's just to have the kind of that expertise so that if there's a-- if, if, you know, the Power Review Board is experiencing an audit and there's a question, maybe there's a resource on the board that could explain, you know, why this is working the way it's working or something like that, or if there's any kind of calculation or something that needs to be done. So just not-- not any specific job duty, but just bringing that background, I guess, to the group.

J. CAVANAUGH: Thank you.

BOSTELMAN: Are there any other questions from committee members?
Senator Moser.

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MOSER: Geography question, how far is it from Scottsbluff to Lincoln?

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: Six hours.

MOSER: Six hours. Is that worse than you, farther away than you?

HUGHES: Yeah.

MOSER: Is it south of you?

HUGHES: No. Scottsbluff is farther. Scottsbluff is in the Panhandle.

MOSER: North.

HUGHES: Yes.

MOSER: OK.

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: We're almost in Wyoming. It takes half an hour to get to Wyoming. It's six hours to get to Lincoln, to put it in perspective.

MOSER: Yeah, but once you get west of North Platte, it all kind of blurs to me.

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: That's what everybody always says.

MOSER: Don't jab me.

BOSTELMAN: Are there other questions from committee members? Relevant questions? Seeing none, thank you, Ms. Troxel Peck, for your willingness to serve, for coming in today, and appreciate your time. That'll be all that we need from you right now.

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: OK.

BOSTELMAN: So thank you.

BRIDGET TROXEL PECK: Thank you all. Nice to meet you.

MOSER: Thank you.

BOSTELMAN: Is there anyone who would like to testify as a proponent for the appointment of Bridget Troxel Peck to the Power Review Board? Seeing none, anyone would like to testify in opposition? Seeing none, anyone that would like to testify in a neutral capacity?

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TIM TEXEL: Senator, I don't want to take up a lot of the committee's time. I just wanted to address some questions. My name is Tim Texel, T-i-m, last name is T-e-x-e-l. I'm the executive director and general counsel for the Power Review Board. You had some questions that Ms. Peck may not be familiar with yet, so I wanted to make myself available. I don't have any prepared remarks. There's not a geographic requirement to board-- to our board members. We have five members and one has to be an accountant, doesn't have to necessarily be a CPA, but has to be an accountant, one is an engineer, and one's an attorney. But there's not a geographic requirement, but right now we don't have anybody from the far west, so we normally would like to. And the Governor would like to have somebody from the western part of the state and happened to be the accountant position that opened up. So that makes it difficult sometimes to find an accountant from the far western part of the state because you're more limited with that professional requirement. So we're very happy to have Ms. Peck that's willing to do that. And I don't remember if there's other questions I could answer, but I want to make myself available. Oh, one question Senator Hughes mentioned LB804. That per diem would only affect our member on the Power Review Board that's designated to represent Nebraska at the Southwest Power Pool Regional State Committee. That would not give a per diem increase to any other members, including our accountant member that Ms. Peck would be filling. So that would only affect the other RSC member, and that would not be her. We already have somebody designated to do that. Any other questions? Sorry.

BOSTELMAN: Are there any questions from committee members? Seeing none, thank you, Mr. Texel.

TIM TEXEL: Thank you.

BOSTELMAN: Is there anyone else who would like to testify in a neutral capacity? Seeing none, that will close our hearing of the confirmation hearing of Bridget Troxel Peck to the Power Review Board. Thank you for coming in today. Thank you.