

For Immediate Release, November 17, 2022

Contacts: Stephanie Cepak, Clean Up TVA Coalition, team@cleanuptva.org

Senate Urged to Confirm TVA Board Nominees Ahead of Congressional Close

WASHINGTON— The [Clean Up TVA coalition](#) and national environmental groups today called for swift confirmation of all nominees to the Tennessee Valley Authority's nine-member Board of Directors by the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. A committee vote on Beth Geer's nomination has repeatedly been delayed.

The groups [sent a letter](#) today to Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer calling on leadership to follow through on a bipartisan deal made last year to confirm all six of President Biden's nominees together. TVA's Board is currently at quorum with five sitting members. Without the immediate Senate confirmation of President Biden's nominees, the Board will no longer be at quorum by the end of this year, hampering its ability to fulfill its statutory duties, including establishing the goals of the agency, developing long-range plans and approving an annual budget.

"TVA is headed towards lacking basic governance unless we get all these nominees confirmed," said Sudeep Ghantasala, coordinator for the Sunrise Movement in Tennessee. "The climate crisis and the fossil fuel infrastructure that is causing it - from coal plants to natural gas infrastructure - have already and will continue to cause so much devastation and heartbreak in the South. We have a real opportunity to mitigate the harms that people will experience, and we need a full board to get there. TVA must be rooted deeply in justice and responsibility as we confront the largest challenge of our time."

In April 2021 Biden nominated Beth Geer, Robert Klein, and Michelle Moore to the TVA board, followed by Adam Wade White, William Rennick, and Joe Ritch in June 2022. The Senate Environmental and Public Works Committee is tasked with advancing these nominees to a full Senate vote. Five of the nominees received [favorable votes](#) in September. Beth Geer, former chief of staff to former Vice President Al Gore, has yet to receive a committee vote after Republican pushback.

"President Biden was quick to nominate well-qualified individuals to the TVA Board after taking office, but those nominees have been blocked from serving the region for over eighteen months," said Dr. Stephen A. Smith, Executive Director of Southern Alliance for Clean Energy. "It is time that Senators, regardless of the state they represent, approve the President's nominations so that the TVA Board can fulfill their role providing oversight and accountability of TVA."

"As an electricity provider whose service area spans seven states, the Tennessee Valley Authority must be a clean energy leader that prioritizes renewable energy over fossil fuels. Electric service for TVA's customers should not depend on dangerous, climate-warming fossil fuels that harm public health and communities," said Luis Martinez, Southeast Climate & Clean

Energy Director for the Natural Resources Defense Council. "Congress must quickly confirm all nominees, so the Authority can take on this urgent task."

After over a year of delays on TVA nominees, the current Board has [delegated authority](#) over the retirement and replacement of two of its largest coal-fired power plants to unelected CEO Jeff Lyash. The utility is performing internal reviews of plans to replace this coal generation with [new gas plants](#) and more than 250 miles of pipeline. Meanwhile, ratepayers in the TVA service territory are paying some of the highest energy bills in the nation, which are [expected to increase](#) as gas prices skyrocket again this winter.

"There's too much on the line for Congress to keep delaying confirmation of all TVA board nominees," said Gaby Sarri-Tobar, a campaigner at the Center for Biological Diversity's Energy Justice program. "TVA will be nearly dysfunctional by the end of the year and unable to make critical energy decisions for its 10 million customers. Tennessee Valley communities deserve a fully functioning board that's accountable to the public and will aggressively tackle the energy and climate crises. It's irresponsible for Congress to let this massive public utility flail around and be co-opted by fossil-fuel interests with the region's renewable energy future at stake."

"We have just made the largest climate investment in history with the Inflation Reduction Act – giving Americans the resources to make their homes cost less to heat and cool, healthier to live in, and emissions-free," said Ari Matusiak, CEO of pro-electrification nonprofit Rewiring America. "Thoughtful leadership of TVA is critical to its successful implementation for so many families."

The TVA Board is poised to make critical decisions on TVA's long-term energy trajectory in the next two years, including investments in renewable energy development and energy efficiency programs and an Integrated Resource Plan. With the recent passage of the Inflation Reduction Act, TVA also has an opportunity to leverage expanded clean energy tax credits to deploy solar, battery storage, and help customers take advantage of cost-saving energy efficiency technologies.

"We have just made the largest climate investment in history with the Inflation Reduction Act – giving Americans the resources to make their homes cost less to heat and cool, healthier to live in, and emissions-free," said Ari Matusiak, CEO of pro-electrification nonprofit Rewiring America. "Thoughtful leadership of TVA is critical to its successful implementation for so many families."

TVA generates electricity for more than 10 million customers in Tennessee, northern Alabama, northeastern Mississippi, southwestern Kentucky, and portions of northern Georgia, western North Carolina and southwestern Virginia.

The [Clean Up TVA coalition](#) is committed to transforming TVA into a green utility by shutting down coal plants, preventing new fossil gas development, and accelerating a just transition to fossil fuel-free, distributed renewable, affordable and democratic energy for all communities and workers in the Tennessee Valley.

[NRDC](http://www.nrdc.org) (Natural Resources Defense Council) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 3 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. NRDC has offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Bozeman, MT, and Beijing. Visit us at www.nrdc.org and follow us on Twitter @NRDC.

Rewiring America is the leading electrification nonprofit, focused on electrifying everything in our communities. We're all in on electrifying where we live, work, learn, and play. Supported by a world-class research team developing accessible, actionable data, and tools for Americans across the country, Rewiring America is crafting the blueprint for Americans to achieve energy efficiency, tackle nationwide emission goals, improve health, save consumers money, and build the next generation of the American workforce in clean energy.