

**U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell**

**Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources Business Committee to Consider  
Pending Legislation**

**July 14, 2021**

**Cantwell Amendment #50**

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

CANTWELL: We're still on Title One. I would offer Cantwell 50 as modified. I want to thank my colleagues, Senator Risch, he and I have been working with many of our colleagues from the Pacific Northwest on what is the Columbia River treaty, a treaty between the United States and Canada, and obviously in efforts to continue to help the Pacific Northwest and growers and irrigators. Currently, there's an imbalance between the US and our northern neighbors. Much of the water that flows to the mighty Columbia starts in Canada but way too much of the electricity generated in the United States is then gifted back to British Columbia, costing regional ratepayers hundreds of millions of dollars a year.

This amendment would create a number of initiatives to improve transmission between Canada and the Western and Southwest United States in order to increase on demand and clean electricity supplies. As the amendment of Cruz, energy storing capacity and water management between the Columbia River Basin to benefit local farmers ratepayers and improve flood control.

**Hirono Amendment #64**

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

CANTWELL: Mr. Chairman, I support Senator Hirono in this effort, and I appreciate her mentioning that I am a cosponsor of this. Our energy sector is going through major transformation. The question is whether we're going to skill and train people to take advantage of those higher wage jobs. I know our state was a recipient of a DOE grant in the southern southwest part of our state that helped take energy workers in one field and update and grow their skills, so that they were making higher wages and contributing to the next generation of energy jobs. Otherwise, I'm not sure where they would have gone or what sector they would have gone to. The problem is we spent a lot of time and a lot of effort trying to assess what the core curriculum and changes were that we should be educating them on. Literally, people had to start with just the basics of what is the picture of next generation energy? What are the skill sets? What are the training needs? And so without getting more expertise at DOE, literally it's like the R&D bill, we're missing a key opportunity to understand what are those needs of those specific job sectors. In this case, we took workers from a coal plant and train them on power system, engineering, and running new power plants of the future. So I very much support this amendment.

This is about building expertise and it is a transformation. We do need data from the private sector on what we think those skill sets are, what we can do to faster get them implemented in our communities, so that we can grow the right workforce for tomorrow. I can support this amendment on cyber security alone. If people haven't figured it out our grid is a major, major attack point now with state actors. We have got to train and skill a workforce on the transmission cybersecurity needs of the future. You could do a whole WPPA program, in my book, just on that. But that's not what this amendment does. This Amendment says let's just get the right expertise so that we can move faster on getting the curriculum development by listening to the private sector tell us what are their workforce needs of the future. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

### **Wyden Amendment #18**

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

CANTWELL: Senator Wyden is number 18 with a hazardous fuel reduction, the forest chief at the moment, who was at the moment, Biggie Christiansen testified before our committee that the Forest Service needed 20 billion to tackle the backlog of hazardous fuels reductions. Since then, we've seen throughout the nation and the Pacific Northwest, specifically, how fast the fire season is really upon us. And this proposal by Senator Wyden would push up the time tested wildfire reduction programs at the US Forest Service and Department of Interior. For example, it would build on the good work of chair Stabenow on the AG Committee by funding additional money to help states prevent and fight increasingly severe fires it establishes a Community Fire Wildfire Defense Grant Program and it improves \$1.5 billion for the tribal governments to implement projects for the Forest Service to reduce fire. This I can't emphasize enough, we're not even in the season yet in my state says we're well, well ahead of where we've been in the past so everyone is bracing and would encourage my colleagues to support this.

[...]

[\[AUDIO\]](#) [\[VIDEO\]](#)

CANTWELL: Well, I think I know my colleague from New Mexico is very well meaning and trying to get us to think hard about this and so is my colleague from Maine, and, you know, I would say the opportunity we have is to look at the forest management a little differently. I'm very excited by the amount of cross laminated timber production that is happening both in Montana, and in Idaho, and in Washington.

This is basically storing carbon, it's about how do we get a plan that we do fuel reduction, give our mills the amount of certainty that they're going to have supply, and then put it into building buildings with cross laminated timber. [This is a] huge, great opportunity for us and so I hope that we'll all talk about this and think a little bit more about how we do it because this fire season is making that even more pressing, but I'm very impressed by the success but from Montana, all

the way over to Washington in cross laminated timber, which is really what we need to be doing instead of letting this timber just burn up. So thank you.