

Report: Rick Perry Will Lead Trump's Department of Energy

Tuesday morning, Politico reported that multiple sources inside President-elect Donald Trump's transition team were saying that former Texas Gov. Rick Perry will be the secretary of energy nominee.

The left-leaning news outlet, of course, focused on the negative side of the rumored selection:

Perry proposed eliminating the Energy Department when he was a 2012 presidential candidate and infamously forgot the agency's name on the debate stage when outlining the parts of the federal government he wanted to eliminate. But conservatives favored Perry for the secretary post, viewing him as someone with management experience who would be willing to question the agency's status quo.

Just last year, as a rival for the 2016 Republican nomination, Perry attacked Trump as a "cancer on conservatism" and a "toxic mix of demagoguery, mean-spiritedness and nonsense that will lead the Republican Party to perdition if pursued." But he reversed course and backed Trump in May.

The nomination news remains just a rumor, though. During the morning press briefing, transition team spokesmen Sean Spicer and Jason Miller would not confirm or deny Perry's selection, but told the press to "stay tuned" for updates.

Pressed about Perry's comments by members of the liberal mainstream media, however, Miller noted that there will be a number of efforts to streamline the federal government once Trump takes office in 38 days. Although jobs will be a primary focus of the early Trump agenda, "more concrete" details on government reform efforts will be announced next month, he

added.

"I will say, though, that we're big fans of Governor Perry," he added. "He did a fantastic job in Texas in terms of job growth and the economy, which includes the energy sector. He's a very skilled man and very talented."

Spicer also chimed in, noting it's the president-elect's agenda that will be advanced, not anyone else's. He said the president-elect has focused on finding people who have been successful but who will ultimately be a good fit and buy into his agenda, not the other way around.

U.S. Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W.V.) was another leading contender for the Department of Energy post, and as a Democrat was a bit of a media darling for the job. One reporter asked Miller why there hadn't been any Democrats added to the Trump Cabinet, noting there aren't many openings left.

Miller simply said Trump has been determined to pick the "best and brightest" whom he has decided will be "the best fit" for each position in his administration.

Another rumored Cabinet appointment is that of U.S. Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (R-Wash.), current chair of the House Republican Conference, for secretary of the interior. The Wall Street Journal reported last week she had been selected for the nomination, but no word has come from the presidential transition team.

If the rumors are true, it would seem Trump is serious about his campaign pledge to "unleash an energy revolution that will bring vast new wealth to our country." He's officially nominated ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson for secretary of state, and Perry is the former governor of an energy-rich state as secretary of energy.

Environmentalists are outraged that McMorris Rodgers might be the nominee for interior because of her position that federal

lands should be opened up for energy exploration. This position, however, is consistent with both Trump's campaign position and the Republican Party's platform.

If both Perry and McMorris Rodgers are, indeed, joining the Trump Cabinet, that will mean evangelical Christians will hold seven—nearly half—of the 16 Cabinet positions. So far, the president-elect has selected nine evangelicals to prominent positions in his administration.

The Cabinet positions remaining to be filled are:

- Secretary of the Interior—rumored to be Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers
- Secretary of Energy—rumored to be former Texas Gov. Rick Perry
- Secretary of Agriculture
- Secretary of Veterans Affairs

Trump also has the following Cabinet-level positions, which are not officially part of the Cabinet or the Presidential Line of Succession, left to nominate:

- Director of the Office of Management and Budget
- U.S. Trade Representative
- Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers

Additionally, the transition team has placed more than 250 “landing team” personnel into government bureaucracies ahead of next month's inauguration. These are lower-level staffers who are directly involved in the transition from the current Obama Administration to the incoming Trump Administration.

During the morning press briefing, Miller addressed the following:

Trump had already met with rap music celebrity Kanye West, whom he considers a long-time friend. Although details of the meeting have been kept private, they did address the media

(sort of) in the lobby of Trump Tower afterward. West simply said, "I just want to get a picture taken," when hounded by the press to comment on the meeting. Trump said they discussed "life," and then said West was "a good man." As they departed, they shared a warm embrace and Trump said, "Take care of yourself. See you again soon."

The media, CNN in particular, criticized Trump for meeting with West, but not taking the Presidential Daily Briefing intelligence report. Miller noted the president-elect remains informed about key intelligence matters, not just from the PDB, but also from his national security adviser, Lt. Gen. (ret.) Mike Flynn.

The media also pressed the matter of Trump's reluctance to accept the CIA's assessment that Russian hackers influenced the U.S. elections. Miller, who was clearly displeased with the question, said the liberal mainstream media's focus on the report was part of an effort to delegitimize the president-elect. He said Trump was focused on moving the country forward and that the election was over. He also noted that the director of national intelligence has not yet embraced the CIA report.

Trump also met earlier in the day with Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates, who emerged from the meeting with some positive things to say about the president-elect and his agenda to spur innovation. Miller also announced a "tech summit" will take place at Trump Tower on Wednesday, but could not elaborate on those who would attend. He said the focus of the event will be on getting America back to inventing and building a climate through access to capital and tax policy that will allow the country to once again "push the envelope."

Trump was also scheduled to meet with former U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), who leads his religious council. The subject of that meeting was not discussed.

Vice President-elect Mike Pence was scheduled to convene a transition executive committee meeting and take part in other transition meetings during the day at Trump Tower before embarking with the president-elect to their scheduled USA Thank You Tour event in West Allis, Wisconsin.

The USA Thank You Tour will make the following stops during the remainder of the week: Hershey, Pennsylvania, on Thursday night; Orlando, Florida, on Friday night and Mobile, Alabama on Saturday afternoon. {eo}