

**Prepared Statement of John J. Sullivan, Nominee for General Counsel,
United States Department of Commerce**

Mr. Chairman. Senator Inouye, Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the General Counsel of the U.S. Department of Commerce. I am grateful and honored that President Bush has given me this opportunity, and I am deeply gratified by the confidence and support shown to me by Secretary Gutierrez. I would also like to thank this Committee and its staff for the courtesies they have extended to me.

The General Counsel of the Department of Commerce is the agency's chief legal officer, providing advice to the Secretary and senior officials as they perform their vital work. The breadth of the Department's responsibilities and activities are reflected in the complex legal environment in which it operates. Competently handling the myriad legislative and regulatory issues faced daily in the Department – from regulation of international trade to management of marine fisheries and a multitude of other functions – will present a formidable challenge, but one that I welcome.

If confirmed by the Senate, I believe I would bring substantial relevant experience to the position of General Counsel. In twenty years of law practice, I have had the privilege of serving in a wide variety of positions: as a law clerk to Judge John Minor Wisdom and to Supreme Court Justice David H. Souter; as Counselor to the Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Office of Legal Counsel at the Justice Department; as a partner in the international law firm of Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw; and my current position as Deputy General Counsel of the Department of Defense. In all of these roles – in representing clients in trials and appellate proceedings, complex regulatory matters, and international business transactions – I believe I have developed the skills and experience necessary to address the legal challenges facing the Commerce Department.

I also know that I have much to learn about the Department, its programs, and the laws and regulations that govern its operations. As I look forward to beginning this education, I know that I will be well supported by the deep and talented staff of career lawyers and other professionals at the Department. I am confident that, with their support, I will perform my duties with the skill and professionalism that President Bush and you expect and deserve.

In this regard, there is no more important duty for the General Counsel than to serve as the chief ethics lawyer for the Department. Compliance with the letter and spirit of the ethics laws is a top priority for Secretary Gutierrez. I share his strong commitment to ensuring that the employees of the Department act with the utmost integrity and honesty, and I will strive to ensure that the Department's programs are implemented in that spirit.

I also have a keen appreciation for the role of this Committee, and the other committees of the Congress, in enacting the laws under which the Department operates and in conducting oversight of the manner in which those laws are executed. I would welcome the opportunity to work with you as the Department pursues its multiple missions.

Permit me to conclude by saying that I believe that public service is a special privilege and responsibility. If confirmed, I will commit my utmost energy, integrity and devotion to serving the President and the American people. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today, and for your consideration of my nomination.

I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have.