

**Prepared Statement of Lily Fu Claffee  
Nominee for General Counsel  
United States Department of Commerce  
May 1, 2008**

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, Members of the Committee,

I am honored to appear before you today as the President's nominee to serve as the next General Counsel of the United States Department of Commerce. I am grateful for the opportunity that President Bush has given me to continue serving the American people, and I deeply appreciate the confidence and support shown to me by Secretary Gutierrez. I also wish to extend a sincere word of thanks to this Committee and to its staff for the courtesies they have extended to me throughout this process.

The General Counsel of the Department of Commerce serves as the agency's chief legal officer, providing legal advice and guidance to the Secretary and other senior Commerce officials as they further the core mission of the Department — namely, to serve the American people by helping to create the right conditions for economic growth and expanded opportunity. The breadth of the Department's responsibilities and activities is reflected in the complex legal environment within which the Department must operate. Handling the wide range of issues faced daily in the Department — from regulation of international trade to management of marine fisheries to numerous scientific, environmental, technological, and economic endeavors — is a formidable challenge, but one that I welcome.

If confirmed by the Senate, I would bring valuable experience and knowledge to the position of General Counsel. In my nearly 15 years of law practice, I have had the privilege of serving in a number of public and private sector positions: as a law clerk to a federal appellate judge, as litigation partner in the global law firm now known as Mayer Brown LLP handling complex antitrust matters, as hiring partner of that firm's 200-attorney Washington office, as a Deputy Associate Attorney General at the Department of Justice overseeing several major litigating components, and currently as the Deputy General Counsel of the Department of the Treasury where, along with the General Counsel, I oversee a legal division of nearly 2,000 attorneys. Each of these positions has helped provide me with the skills and experience necessary to lead and manage the work of a large legal organization charged with a vast array of programmatic responsibilities. My government service over the last three years in particular has given me broad exposure to the functioning of federal agencies, their relationship with Congress, and the importance of having strong and independent Inspectors General.

Yet I know I have much to learn about the Department, and the laws and regulations that govern its operations. As I learn, I know I will be well supported by a deep staff of talented career lawyers and other professionals. I am confident that, with their support, I will perform my duties with the skill and professionalism that the President, the members of this Committee, Secretary Gutierrez, and the public expect and deserve. In particular, the General Counsel serves no more important role than as chief ethics lawyer for the Department. Secretary Gutierrez has already requested that, during my tenure, I continue to make this responsibility a top priority for the Department.

In conclusion, let me affirm my belief that stewardship through public service is a special privilege and responsibility, and that it is a lawyer's highest calling. Nowhere have I learned this lesson more vividly than from my immigrant parents who, having left their homes and families behind in China many decades ago in search of the American dream, felt a particular responsibility to impress upon their American-born daughter how precious the blessings of liberty and opportunity are that they found in this great land. They, and in particular, my father, who as a young airman in China fought in the Second World War with men like the Chairman and the Vice Chairman to preserve a heritage of freedom, keenly understood the importance of service to one's nation. If confirmed, I will commit my utmost ability, 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.