

Testimony of
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Nominee for Assistant Secretary
for Oceans and Atmosphere
United States Department of Commerce

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Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Rockefeller, Ranking Member Thune, Members of the Committee, it is an honor to be considered for the position of Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere within the U.S. Department of Commerce. Thank you for the opportunity to testify this morning.

I would like to take a moment to introduce my wife of nearly 35 years, Jo Ann, without whom I would not be here today. Beside her are my daughter Hana and son Greg. Both of them have graduated from college and have embarked on their own careers.

My appreciation for the ocean began as a child through frequent trips with my father and mother to a cove in Laguna Beach, California. Later, through travels along the Pacific, Atlantic, and Gulf coasts and in Hawaii, I became more familiar with the ocean environment and its resources, and this led me to pursue studies in the biological sciences in college. Ultimately, I received a B.A. from the University of Washington and Ph.D. from Stanford University.

I have held positions in the public and private sectors for more than 30 years, primarily at the intersection of science and policy. I have spent much of my career identifying ways to foster scientific and technological innovation to further national goals, including economic growth and the effective management and conservation of natural resources. I have also promoted efforts to make scientific information more accessible to the public to encourage greater stakeholder engagement in decision making processes. I am particularly interested in the application of information technologies, such as decision support systems, to further the organization and communication of scientific information.

Most recently, I have led the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, an organization that fosters collaborative efforts to prevent and resolve environmental and natural resources disputes involving federal agencies. I have devoted the last several years to identifying ways to promote communication across federal agencies and with tribes, state and local government agencies, and the private sector to efficiently address these issues. I have worked to promote public engagement in decision-making by making information and tools readily

available to people and by encouraging agencies to place an emphasis on collaborative, stakeholder-driven approaches to problem solving.

Early in my career I was a senior staff member with the Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology, and Government which offered the opportunity to learn from some of our Nation's leaders about their experiences in working to advance public policy in this area and to effectively manage large public institutions. This included a number of meetings with Members of Congress to discuss the role of science and technology in policy-making processes. Twenty-five years ago, as a congressional fellow at the former Office of Technology Assessment, I worked on science policy matters before Congress and had the opportunity to lead a study of ways to improve the control of toxic substances that affect the nervous system.

As Assistant Director for Environment in the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) in the Executive Office of the President I worked on a wide range of issues including ways to advance technologies to further national energy and environmental goals, and ways to better apply science and technology to prepare for and respond to natural disasters, including floods and hurricanes. In my early days at OSTP I was involved in coordinating the organization of scientific information across federal and state agencies and the private sector to guide efforts to recover from the Mississippi River flood of 1993.

As Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Water and Science, I worked on salmon and other fishery issues in the Northwest and East, and water quality challenges from the Gulf of Mexico to the Everglades and Chesapeake Bay. I helped foster research and monitoring activities throughout the country, including the Great Lakes. Working at Interior offered opportunities to collaborate with tribal, state, and local governments in addressing a range of economic and natural resource issues.

In the private sector, I served as the first President and CEO of an organization called NatureServe. NatureServe supports the consistent gathering of information about the status of animals and plants across the United States and in several countries throughout the Western Hemisphere. NatureServe's data are used to help guide decisions about commercial development, natural resource management, and conservation.

I appreciate the time several of you and your staff have taken in recent weeks to discuss issues related to the oceans, marine fisheries, the diversity of species that inhabit our Nation's coasts and resources, and the tremendous economic and social value of these resources. The fishing industry, both commercial and recreational, is an integral component of the engine that drives our economy, and I am committed to ensuring the sustainability of this critical resource and the livelihoods that depend on it.

I have been fortunate to live in several states that comprise the Pacific, Gulf, and Atlantic coasts: from California, Oregon, and Washington; to Texas and Alabama; and Massachusetts, Virginia,

and Georgia. This offered me the opportunity to observe first-hand the value people place on the coastal-marine environment.

The diverse experiences I have had over my career have shaped the way I view and address environmental, natural resources, and economic issues. I enjoy working on challenges involving diverse and often competing perspectives. I place a priority on taking the time to understand alternative viewpoints, to ensuring that scientific information is applied appropriately, and to working in a collaborative fashion to devise sound policy and to prevent and resolve disputes. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working with you and supporting your efforts to help ensure the viability of the Nation's coastal and marine resources.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and for your consideration of my nomination. I would be happy to respond to any questions you may have.