

Prepared Statement for Peter B. Davidson
Nominee for General Counsel of the Department of Commerce

Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. I have worked with almost all of you in some capacity during my time in Washington, D.C., and I look forward to hearing your views and questions. Let me start by introducing my family, starting with my wife Kari, daughters Maddie and Sophie, and son Bjorn. My father, Robert Davidson, travelled from northern Wisconsin by boat, car and plane to be here as well. I appreciate the encouragement they have given me to pursue my next job in public service. Also, I'd be remiss if I didn't thank the dedicated and professional staff at the Department of Commerce who have helped me tremendously over the past several months. Finally, I thank the President for indicating his trust in me by nominating me for this important position, and also Secretary Ross for his strong support.

I will be brief, as I truly do want to hear what is on your minds. You have all of my background materials...so I will dispense with a detailed rehash of my history and qualifications. If confirmed, I think the diverse experiences I have had both inside and outside of government will all contribute to my ability to manage the challenges and explore the opportunities presented. I'd like to take my time here to talk about the challenges facing our country and how I would like to help the Department use its broad jurisdiction to address these challenges. Former Chairman Inouye described the scope of the Department's mission when he opened a similar hearing in 2009 by noting that the Department "affects almost all sectors of our nation's economy...[and] literally touches each of our lives." I'm excited to join the Department to help Secretary Ross and others use the Department's wide array of tools to help create jobs and expand our American economy.

So, how to do that? First, in terms of trade, the Department plays a critical role in making sure that the world trading system treats American business fairly, and also opens new opportunities for our businesses abroad. As Secretary Ross noted in recent testimony before this Committee, we will

provide access to our markets to those who agree to play by the rules, but will not stand by as American workers are harmed by unfair practices. He also indicated an interest in seeking out new agreements with our trading partners, which will be essential for American businesses to compete with other major economies.

Second, U.S technology companies are the envy of the world and a force multiplier for American jobs and growth in the tech, services and manufacturing sectors. It is important to fashion the right government policies that both remove barriers to investment and innovation and also protect against unfair and restrictive policies by foreign governments. These advanced technologies will play important roles in worker retraining and in maintaining international dexterity in tech and services, agriculture, as well as the backbone of the American economy, manufacturing.

The Department also plays an important role in supporting our fisheries, farmers, and maritime industries, protecting intellectual property, and in establishing scientific standards and promoting research. It is also critical that we ensure that the decennial census be thorough, accurate, and efficient because of the importance of the data it collects. And finally, if I am confirmed as General Counsel, I will work hard to see to it that the Department operates under the highest ethical standards and complies with all applicable laws and regulations.

So, there is a lot of work to be done to get the right policies in place to create jobs and grow our economy. It's my view, and a view I have held and acted upon throughout my career, that it's easier to achieve these goals if done in a bipartisan way with input from Congress, the Administration, and private sector stakeholders. When I was a young staffer in the House trying to round up Democratic votes for a bill, I got some good advice from former Rep. Charlie Stenholm who told me, "Peter, it's a lot easier for me to be there on the landing if I'm there at the takeoff." I've spent my career rolling up my sleeves to try to find bipartisan solutions to tough problems, and, if confirmed, I will do the same as General Counsel of the Department of Commerce.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.