

**Introduction of Governor Gary Locke by U.S. Senator Patty Murray
Senate Commerce Committee – Nomination of Gary Locke to Be U.S. Secretary of Commerce
Wednesday, March 18, 2009**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Hutchison, and members of the Committee. Along with my colleague, Senator Cantwell, and members of the Washington state House delegation, it's my pleasure to introduce Gary Locke, the former Governor of Washington state, to serve as the next Secretary of Commerce.

I want to welcome Governor Locke and his wife, Mona, to this hearing, and to congratulate them and their family – daughters Emily and Madeline, and their son Dylan – on this honor.

Mr. Chairman, I am proud to recommend Gary Locke to be the next Secretary of Commerce at this important time in our nation's history. As we all work to recover from the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, we need a Commerce Secretary with the dedication and expertise to carry out policies that will strengthen our economy well into the future.

Governor Locke understands the importance of the American Dream because he has lived it. His grandfather emigrated from China and worked as a servant just one mile from the governor's mansion in Olympia. Governor Locke spent his first 6 years in Seattle's Yesler Terrace, a public housing project for families of World War II veterans.

His background taught him first-hand the importance of education, hard work and responsibility – and what it means to live in a country that provides opportunities for its citizens. He studied hard in school, helped out at his father's grocery store, and became an Eagle Scout.

He graduated from Franklin High School in Seattle, Yale University, and Boston University Law School, and began a long career in public service – first in the King County Prosecutor's Office, and then in the Washington State House of Representatives.

I first met Governor Locke when we served together in the state Capitol in Olympia. And I couldn't be happier that he is now the nominee to head the Department of Commerce.

There are lots of reasons why Governor Locke is an ideal nominee, which I will talk about in a moment. But I want to take this opportunity to tell one personal story that I think illustrates his commitment to public service and to making sure we make the best decisions for the taxpayers.

As I said, I first met Governor Locke in the state Legislature when he was chair of the House Appropriations Committee and I was a new state Senator trying to get a piece of legislation passed that was critical to my constituents.

As a part of the process of getting the bill passed, I went before then-Chairman Locke's committee. And it was one of the toughest experiences of my political life up to that point. He knew the budget inside and out, and he ran me through the paces. He grilled me about what my bill would do and what impact it would have on the taxpayers.

He was tough. But ultimately, because he asked the hard questions and made me defend my legislation, we improved the focus of the bill and got it passed.

Governor Locke has brought that level of expertise and dedication to the taxpayers in every position he has held. And it makes him an ideal candidate to lead the Commerce Department.

Now, Mr. Chairman, let me say a few words about the experience Governor Locke brings to this position. One of the most critical jobs the Commerce Secretary performs is finding markets for American products and technologies.

Governor Locke understands how important this is – and he knows how to do it successfully. As the two-term governor of the nation’s most trade-dependent state, he spent eight years breaking down trade barriers and promoting American products – from airplanes, to apples, to operating systems.

He has led numerous, successful delegations to our Asian trading partners to foster those relationships. And the experience and the relationships he has built over the years will serve him well as he works to promote American products and American technologies to a global market.

Governor Locke also understands that the health of the environment has a direct impact on our quality of life – and on the economy. People in my home state of Washington really value our natural resources for recreation and enjoyment. But a great many people also depend on those same resources to make a living.

Finding a good balance between those two interests is something every Washington state governor grapples with. And Governor Locke’s experience means he will hit the ground running as Commerce Secretary as we confront global climate change and other environmental concerns, including the management of our fisheries.

And that leads me to my final point.

Former Senator Fritz Hollings – who served as Chairman of this Committee – used to joke that the Secretary of Commerce always comes in thinking he will be the head businessman. And then he finds out that he’s really the head fisherman.

And I’m not trying to diminish the importance of the Commerce Department or this issue. The management of our limited fishing stocks is vitally important. And – as a Senator from the Northwest – I know from experience that we need someone to head the Commerce Department who has a detailed understanding of this delicate and complicated issue.

Governor Locke is the only Commerce Secretary nominee, to my knowledge, who has personally negotiated a fishing treaty to balance fishing and environmental interests. He understands both sides, and he will bring an evenhanded approach to this issue at Commerce.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to introduce Governor Locke to you. He has served the people of our state well. He will bring that same level of commitment and intelligence to the Administration, and I’m proud to support his confirmation.

