

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TIMOTHY R. PETTY, Ph.D.

NOMINEE FOR

ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR WATER AND SCIENCE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

BEFORE THE SENATE ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Thank you Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Cantwell, and the distinguished Members of the Committee. Thank you, Senator Risch, for your kind introduction, and for your leadership and service to the great state of Idaho and the United States.

It is a distinct honor and privilege to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to serve the American people as Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the Department of the Interior. I wish to thank Secretary Zinke for his support and confidence in me for this position. Today, I ask for your consideration and consent to the President's nomination.

I would like to start by introducing my family here with me today: My wife, Elaine Petty. One of my four siblings, Pam, who traveled from Indiana to be here. I'd like to thank them, and a number of my friends who are also here, who have been a great support for many years.

I would like to begin with a short, personal introduction to help provide some background for how I came to be here today.

I was born and raised on a family farm in Grant County, Indiana. I am proud to be the son of Esther and Morris Petty. My father, a farmer and large animal cattle breeder, was killed in an automobile accident when I was young, and my amazing mother raised five children on the farm. I attended public schools and developed a life-long love of being outdoors on the land. Working on the farm with my family, cultivating agricultural fields, harvesting fall crops, milking cows, bailing hay, and watching the growth of life all around me was foundational in preparation for my entire career. My mother raised all of us kids with strong family values, solid work ethics, genuine integrity, a high commitment to education and belief in God.

I was inspired to study earth science from a young age. Our farm was bordered by an important river and watershed in the northeast part of Indiana and the water fascinated me. A stone quarry and gravel pit on our property created curiosity and then a love for geology.

This interest led me to pursue a Bachelor of Science in Geosciences at Purdue University. I then worked in Indiana, California, and abroad as a staff geologist and hydrogeologist with a number of geo-technical and geoscience engineering firms, learning the trade of ground surveying,

mapping, surface and sub-surface hydrology, earthquake investigation and ground water contamination and water quality research.

After working in the private sector, I joined the staff of the Senate Republican Conference, under two consecutive Chairmen: Senator Connie Mack of Florida and Senator Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania. This time, in the late 1990's and early 2000's, was a period when Congress was focusing on digital communication transformation and I had the good fortune of working to accomplish this with a bipartisan team of Senate staff. During this time, I also earned a Master's Degree in Business Administration from the University of Maryland to help hone my management and technology skills.

While still working in the legislative branch, I was asked by the George W. Bush administration to bring my earth science, policy, and communications experience to the executive branch at the Department of the Interior. I was tapped to be the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Science under Secretary Kempthorne.

At DOI, I supported the leadership of the U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Reclamation. This included providing oversight of the policy and technical review of programs such as stream gages, irrigation water demand, ground monitoring of earthquakes, volcanoes, geospatial mapping, and LandSat 5, 7 and (then) future 8 satellite imagery.

In addition, Secretary Kempthorne designated me to be the DOI representative as the Co-Chair of the Extended Continental Shelf Task Force; the Executive Principal to the Gulf Coast Hypoxia Task Force; DOI Liaison on Antarctic Treaty Summit; Ex-Officio for the National Bio-Defense Science Board; Executive Principal on the National Bio-surveillance Interagency Team; the DOI principal review team leader for the Interagency Panel for Climate Change, and the senior executive representing the President of the United States for the science agreement with Vietnam on the Mekong Delta.

At the end of the Bush administration, I returned to the legislative branch to work for Senator Risch. For the past 9 years, as Deputy Legislative Director and Legislative Assistant, I have been responsible for a broad portfolio of policy issues, including Water Resources, Hydroelectric Dams, Environmental Protection, Climate Science, Technology, Science research, NASA, Cyber-security, Infrastructure, and Telecommunications. This includes supporting Senator Risch on this committee in areas addressing Indian water rights settlements including Idaho Nez Perce tribe, Coeur d'Alene tribe, Shoshone-Bannock tribes, hydropower, Biological Options in the Columbia River Basin, aquifer recharge projects, to name a few.

While working at the Senate, I received my Ph.D. in Water Science and Policy in the School of Engineering and Mining at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I took a practical approach in my research for my dissertation in surface hydrology that was inspired by my previous service in DOI and my observations of the need for more timely warnings with flood hazards.

Together, I believe my experience and education has prepared me for this position to effectively serve the American people. I look forward to applying my full energy and commitment to advancing the U.S. earth science and water innovation. I commit myself to provide the best-informed advice possible to Secretary Zinke. I will listen to and work with this Committee and Congress, with the earth science communities, and with the western water communities. I look forward to working with the impressive employees at the Bureau of Reclamation and the USGS, who use their expertise every day to deliver good science in order to address earth science and water resources for the American people.

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Cantwell, and members of the Committee, I thank you again for considering my nomination. Throughout my time in the Senate, I have had the privilege to work with virtually every member of this committee and their staff in a good faith effort to build consensus and workable solutions to the issues before us. If confirmed, I look forward to continuing those efforts as we pursue the common goal of securing America's water and science future.

I look forward to answering any questions you may have.