

**Statement of
Laura Daniel-Davis
Nominee for the Position of
Assistant Secretary
for
Land and Minerals Management
at the
U.S. Department of the Interior
Before the
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
United States Senate**

September 21, 2021

Good Morning Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, and Members of the Committee.

I'm honored to appear before you as President Biden's nominee to be the Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management at the Department of the Interior.

And I'm grateful for the Committee's consideration of my nomination.

I am joined today by my husband Mark and my mom and dad. Our daughter is in her first year of college and unfortunately can't be here today. My parents provided the example of public service that has guided me throughout my career - my mother as a high school teacher and later high school principal. My dad was an aide here in the Senate and a curator for many years at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History.

My sister and I spent our time outside when we were growing up. We were lucky - there was so much open space in our community, and we splashed through the river and built forts and made our own trails in the woods. It was the beginning of my appreciation for nature and wildlife, which has such a positive impact on both your mind and your physical well-being.

In addition to my family, the Department of the Interior has been one of the most significant and formative influences on my life. The leadership positions I have held have given me knowledge of the public lands, the energy programs - both on- and offshore, a deep understanding of the Department's operations, and the importance of collaboration.

I first came to the Department in 1993, as an aide to Secretary Bruce Babbitt. That is when I first saw how much this Department touches people's lives in very real ways every day - whether we live in the West or any other region of the country. I returned to the Department in 2009 to work

for Secretary Ken Salazar. I learned from him to aspire to embody the servant-leader model: never forgetting that our government service is on behalf of everyone but yourself.

As the Department's Chief of Staff, I helped support the transition to Secretary Sally Jewell, who ensured that we were leading with equity and fairness.

In between my service at Interior, I worked in the House of Representatives, for Congressman Mark Udall, before he was one of your colleagues here in the Senate. To me, then-Congressman Udall exemplified the bipartisan spirit I value so much, and from him I learned the key Mo Udall-ism: we can disagree without being disagreeable, in this work that we do together.

And I am now back at the Department of the Interior, humbled and grateful to be working for Secretary Deb Haaland. She is inspirational, and once again I am learning something every day in my time at the Department.

My previous positions at Interior provided me with something of a bird's eye view of the Department, and a deep respect for its 70,000 employees. I rolled up my sleeves on issues from Klamath Basin restoration, to Deepwater Horizon emergency and recovery, and Tribal consultation.

I also gained such an appreciation for the bureaus I have been nominated to help lead: the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement, and the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.

I value and appreciate the BLM's multiple use mission that makes it uniquely important for resource development, recreation, and to provide economic opportunities to working families as it manages the vast federal acreage under its jurisdiction. Offshore, the important work of BOEM and BSEE to responsibly and safely develop energy resources on our Outer Continental Shelf helps to assure our country's energy independence. And OSMRE provides crucial support to coal communities for reclamation of former mining lands and economic development opportunities, making sure states have the tools to oversee their transitioning programs. If I am confirmed for this role, I am committed to supporting these bureaus and to working with them to understand how I can best help them be successful in their missions and for the American public.

During my time at the National Wildlife Federation, I was proud to help support the great work of many of you on the bipartisan Great American Outdoors Act, that once in a lifetime opportunity you've given Americans to address maintenance needs across agencies and conserve and restore lands in our communities for access, recreation, and reflection.

The issues we face at the Department are as challenging as they are interesting, and they demand leadership that listens first, addresses underlying inequities, and strives for balanced, bipartisan, and collaborative solutions.

I strive to have an open door, to be available to different points of view and information that could guide me to make a more thoughtful decision, and to nurture the next generation of leaders who will take the mantle when we are all long past retirement.

If confirmed, I commit to working with this Committee, with the communities you serve, with states and Tribes, and the variety of other interests in our work, in the shared challenges we face. I will prioritize partnership and collaboration.

Thank you for allowing me to appear here today, and I look forward to answering your questions.