

**OPENING STATEMENT  
TERI DONALDSON**

**NOMINATION HEARING  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Cantwell, Members of the Committee, and staff: thank you for the honor of appearing before you today as the nominee for Inspector General at the U.S. Department of Energy.

I'd also like to thank President Trump, Secretary Perry and their teams for the confidence they've shown in me by nominating me to this critical position. Several family members are here with me today - My mother, Lorene, who has traveled here from Ashford Alabama, and my Aunt Bev, here from Atlanta. My two sons are also here --Cameron, age 19 and Nathan age 15. These wonderful people are part of the support network that allows me to take on professional challenges. I'm very grateful for the sacrifices they've made along the way.

I had the tremendous good fortune to begin my legal career as a federal prosecutor in Tampa, Florida. I was barely out of law school, when the U.S. Attorney, Bob Genzman, took a chance on hiring me. I'll always be grateful for that extraordinary opportunity. I was hired in part because I had an interest in prosecuting environmental crime. During my 9 years as a federal prosecutor, I worked closely with the FBI, EPA and others. Together we established one of the top three Environmental Crimes Units in the country. We prosecuted hazardous waste cases, Clean Air Act cases, Clean Water Act cases, and the very first prosecution of a felony under the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships. We also captured what was at that time, the longest prison sentence ever imposed by the Department of Justice for an environmental crime not involving a fatality. I learned a great deal about leading complex investigations, and about the importance of maintaining the highest standards of integrity when collecting and presenting the facts. If confirmed as Inspector General, I hope to bring the lessons I learned as a federal prosecutor to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

I was in my ninth year as a federal prosecutor, when our environmental work attracted the attention of Florida's new governor at that time, Jeb Bush, and David Struhs, his newly appointed Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), one of Florida's largest agencies. I joined David Struhs' team at DEP as General Counsel in 1999. David was kind enough to write a letter for me, which has been submitted for these proceedings. That means a great deal to me. One of my first assignments at DEP was to lead the legal team representing Florida in the ACF Tri-State water wars. During this time, DEP was also litigating the Everglades restoration cases, TMDLs, and several other matters. It was a great experience for me to see the world from the perspective of a state.

We also endured more than our share of tropical storms and hurricanes, which create significant issues for hazardous waste sites. DEP also housed the Florida Energy Office, so we were heavily involved in offshore issues, pipelines and power matters. I left DEP as the next administration was coming on board and entered private practice. I then spent over 12 years in private practice as a partner, the last 7 years

of which were in Houston, Texas. The energy-based aspects of my practice led me to move to Houston in 2011, which was a great experience for both me and my sons, both of whom are now “Texans,” and proud to say so.

My time in the private sector was just as interesting and rewarding as my time in the public sector. In fact, I probably learned more in the private sector, in many ways. I’ve represented energy companies, utilities, manufacturing, waste companies, railroads, airlines and others. Although I cannot disclose details, I led many teams conducting internal investigations for national and international companies. These investigations were conducted very much like the work of an Inspector General. In these situations, clients hire outside counsel in order to acquire independent findings. Several of these investigations began because employees stepped forward to report problems. I have first-hand experience with the critical role these employees play, and the need to protect such employees from retaliation.

I also did energy-related project work in the private sector. I managed environmental budgets for energy projects, and I gained first-hand experience with risk assessments from the perspective of the regulated entity. I was also lead counsel on several large procurement matters. I understand the importance of clear rules and expectations. My experience in the private sector will inform my views and expectations as Inspector General if I have the honor of being confirmed.

About a year ago, I joined Senator Barrasso’s team on EPW. I had never worked for any legislative body, so I’m particularly grateful for this opportunity. Thank you, Senator Barrasso, for your kind comments. One of the things that I’ve learned during my time on the EPW staff, is that being responsive to Congress is critically important. Congress rightly expects thorough and complete information, which should be delivered in a timely way. Requests from Congress are an opportunity to get the facts straight and to communicate effectively with the American public. If confirmed, I will be both thoughtful and responsive to Congress.

As you know, the role of the Inspector General is not a policy making role. If confirmed, it would be my job to remain impartial, and to avoid demonstrating a preference for one policy over the other. What excites me most about this opportunity is to learn more about the ground-breaking work being done at the national laboratories. It’s not an exaggeration to say that these facilities are contributing to the most significant areas of scientific research, with contributions to computing, medical technologies, energy related innovations and of course, national defense. If confirmed, I hope to advance these efforts by devoting OIG resources as needed to protect these world class facilities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. It is an honor to appear before the Committee today. I look forward to answering your questions.