

**STATEMENT OF
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NOMINEE FOR THE POSITION OF
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BEFORE THE
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
UNITED STATES SENATE**

APRIL 29, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, and members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. I am honored to be with you today as President Joe Biden's nominee to be Deputy Secretary of the Department of the Interior. I am very happy to be appearing before this Committee again. I am joined this morning by my wife Carrie and my two sons Alex and Auggie.

If I may, I will begin with a brief personal introduction, which will help explain why I am here today seeking your consent to return to the Interior Department as Secretary Haaland's Deputy and Chief Operating Officer.

I am and always will be a Westerner. I was born in Colorado, and my first home was in the small town of Brush in Morgan County. The family vocation on my mother's side was horse racing, and my grandfather was racing secretary for the Colorado Racing Commission. My father was a Marine who served in Viet Nam. In the late 1970s, he got a job working in the Prudhoe Bay field on the North Slope, and my family moved to Alaska where I was raised and graduated high school.

I will always be grateful for my upbringing in Alaska. Alaska is where I learned to hunt, fish, ski, backpack, and appreciate the beauty, adventure, and power of America's vast landscapes and wild places. I am proud to say that my children are developing their own connections with the outdoors, taking frequent weekend camping and hiking trips in the National and state parks in Virginia and Maryland.

Secretary Salazar brought me into the Interior Department in 2010 to help the Department respond to the *Deepwater Horizon* crisis and implement sweeping reforms to federal offshore oil and gas oversight. These reforms included the successful reorganization of the Minerals Management Service and establishment of three new agencies with clear and de-conflicted missions. These reforms lasted through a change in administration because the case for the reorganization was

compelling, we enlisted the career staff to help define the responsibilities and design the functions of the new agencies, and we worked with Congress to stand up the agencies and ensure they were properly resourced.

My perspective on leadership, as well as my understanding of how to be effective in government, is shaped by my unique career path at Interior. As mentioned, I started at DOI as a senior advisor in an agency that no longer exists. Secretary Salazar appointed me to be the first director of the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management where, among other things, I oversaw the first offshore wind lease sales in the United States. I also served at the assistant secretary level as the Acting Assistant Secretary for Land and Minerals Management. Finally, I spent three years as the Department's chief of staff under Secretary Sally Jewell. All of these roles and experiences have given me a profound respect for the work of the 70,000 career staff at the Interior Department.

Which brings us to today. If confirmed, I would be honored and humbled to rejoin the Interior Department and to work with Secretary Haaland. Secretary Haaland is an inspiration. I will be deeply invested in supporting her in achieving her historic vision for the Department – promoting equity and confronting injustice; bringing America's lands, water, and people to bear in tackling the great climate and conservation crises facing us; and ensuring that the Nation's public lands and wildlife are preserved for future generations.

This is a critical time for Interior. No other Department is better equipped to rise to meet these challenges and seize the opportunities that lie before the Nation.

Interior is front and center in meeting the Administration's target of reducing greenhouse gas. This effort includes bringing public lands and waters to bear in building a clean energy economy that supports good-paying union jobs; and strengthening working communities. Interior brings to the table the premier science agency in the federal government, the USGS, and is on the front lines addressing drought and partnering across the federal government and with western states to combat wildfire.

There is also no greater set of responsibilities than those of honoring the government-to-government relationship with Tribes including through genuine and meaningful consultation; respecting Tribal sovereignty and working to advance self-determination; and fulfilling the United States' trust and treaty obligations. DOI also has a special responsibility with respect to the Insular Areas, including U.S. territories and under compacts with the freely associated states, and to the Native Hawaiian Community, as well.

Interior, as the steward of the National Parks, public lands, and the largest wildlife refuge system in the world, has an awesome responsibility to conserve these lands, nature, and wildlife for the benefit of all Americans and for future generations. I am grateful to this Committee and Congress for its investments in protecting our shared heritage and legacy through the Great American Outdoors Act and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

If confirmed, I commit to have an open door and an open mind on the important challenges before us. And I also commit to listen to and collaborate with this Committee and with each of you. I hope this hearing will be the first of many of those conversations. Thank you, and I am ready to answer any questions you may have.