

STATEMENT OF KRISTEN J. SARRI

Nominee to Serve As
Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management, and Budget
United States Department of the Interior

UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
October 20, 2015

Thank you Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee for welcoming me today. It is a privilege to be considered by this Committee as the President's nominee for Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget at the Department of the Interior.

I want to thank Senator Reed for his support of my nomination and his support throughout my career. I would not be here today without that support. His dedication to service, his commitment to improving the lives of others, and his work ethic serve as the model for me.

I am pleased that my family could join me today: my mom Rosemary, my sister Cathy, my niece Gabriela, and my nephew Alex. My Mom is an inspiration to me. She is an active social worker in Detroit who, at age 89, is training the next generation of social workers to serve urban communities. At a very early age she instilled in me the value of service to others. I also want to acknowledge my Dad who passed away almost 20 years ago. My Dad was a Greek immigrant who came to the United States after World War II. He fell in love with our national parks and every summer he packed the family station wagon and took us on a new adventure out West. These adventures ignited my interest in the American outdoors, and it is something that I hope I passed along to my niece and nephew. My family is a constant source of support for me, for which I am always thankful.

I am also grateful to President Obama for nominating me to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget (PMB), and to Secretary Jewell for her support and confidence in me.

Finally, I want to thank Members of the Committee and their staff for taking the time to meet with me. If I am confirmed, I look forward to continuing our conversations and strengthening the vital relationship between the Department and this Committee.

Throughout my professional life, I have sought out opportunities to promote community development, natural resources stewardship and job creation by building partnerships and working to strengthen the effectiveness of government. Prior to joining the Administration in 2010, I spent nine years in the Senate working for the bipartisan Northeast-Midwest Senate Coalition, Senator Reed, and the Senate Commerce Committee. In each of these roles I was fortunate to work for Senators who focused on how government should work best to serve the American people and support our economy and environment. I learned from them the value of strong bipartisan cooperation, collaboration, and gaining other perspectives when working to shape policy. It is these lessons and experiences that I carry with me and they shape my work in the Administration.

As this Committee knows, the Department of the Interior is a significant contributor to this Nation's economy through energy and mineral production, recreation, scientific discovery, foraging and grazing, timber production, and the delivery of water in Western states. Interior has special trust responsibilities to American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Native Hawaiians, and affiliated island communities. It is responsible for conserving and protecting America's natural and cultural resources. I view PMB's role as supporting the Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and our bureaus' efforts to accomplish their missions and drive impacts for the American people in our diverse areas of responsibilities.

PMB does this in several important ways. First, through budget formulation and execution and financial management, PMB works to ensure the sound stewardship of Interior's fiscal resources. Second, through management reforms and business initiatives, PMB works to make sure the Department is maximizing resource sharing among the bureaus to increase efficiency and reduce costs in order to invest more in programs and activities. And third, through the management of Department-wide programs and development of cross-cutting policies, PMB provides coordination and cohesion across the Department.

For the past year, I have served as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for PMB and have had the privilege to work with a team of highly skilled and committed staff who make the Department operate more efficiently and work more effectively for the American people. If confirmed, I would want to continue these efforts. This morning, I would like to mention a few key areas where I hope to continue progress to strengthen the Department for the future and support critical policy priorities, if confirmed.

First, the Department's workforce is large and geographically dispersed with over 350 different occupations due to the diversity of our mission. Like most Federal agencies, an increasing number of our employees are eligible to retire: 20 percent are eligible to retire this year, and within five years, the number increases to 40 percent. If confirmed, I would continue to support the Department's efforts to engage in workforce planning and building a diverse workforce that is inclusive. These efforts are critical to being able to deliver our mission in the future, and therefore, to continue our economic contributions to the Nation and meet our trust, cultural, and natural responsibilities.

Second, the Department is fully committed to improving public access to data to support resource conservation and management and to increase collaboration and transparency. For example, DOI has significant data holdings for public lands that are of value to the public, industry, academia, as well as our government partners. PMB is working to make this data more accessible for these partners to leverage it to build apps, support tourism, and improve how we provide customer service to visitors to our public lands. Last year, the Department completed the process of migrating all of our bureaus onto one integrated business management system to facilitate greater transparency and accountability in financial management, acquisition, real property management, and other fields of business. Because of this foresight, the Department is much more agile and bureaus can collaborate on key business management practice which enhances Department-wide efficiencies. Also, last year, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue launched the U.S. Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (USEITI) Data Portal which provides information to the public on extractive resource management and how we

manage the approximately \$10 billion in revenues we collect annually from energy and mineral development. If confirmed, I would like to continue to build on these open data initiatives.

Third, as I mentioned, PMB is responsible for many Department-wide programs from wildfire management to the cleanup of contaminated sites to aviation safety and emergency management. It also plays a key role in coordinating across bureaus on policy issues such as invasive species management, land conservation, youth engagement, and wildland fire resilience. PMB plays an important role in facilitating cooperation across the Department and working with other Federal agencies to leverage resources and knowledge. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to work with this Committee and the Congress on these issues.

Again, I want to thank the Committee for considering my nomination. I look forward to answering your questions.