

STATEMENT OF  
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NOMINEE FOR THE POSITION OF  
DIRECTOR OF THE  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BEFORE THE  
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
JUNE 8, 2021

Good morning, Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso, and members of the committee.

I'm honored to come before you as President Biden's nominee to be the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

I thank the president for the nomination. I thank this committee for its consideration of it.

I'm grateful to my state's senior senator and former boss, Senator Tester, for the kind introduction.

I am joined today by my husband of 30 years, Richard Manning. I'm certain I would not be here without him. With me also in spirit are my parents: my father, a submarine commander who is buried across the river in Arlington National Cemetery, and my mother, who raised five kids and died just last summer. They instilled in me the core belief that service to our nation and its people is our highest calling. That has guided my every step and placed me in this seat before you today.

Public service – serving in government – is serving the people, and if done well, it's serving the future.

My first professional job was running a land trust in Missoula, Montana. I sat around kitchen tables, discussing private financial and family matters. That's where I learned that land and people are inextricably tied.

I later directed an organization working to clean up one of the country's largest superfund sites. We gathered people from all camps --- Republicans and Democrats, Rotarians, trade unionist and environmentalists --- to work for the removal of an ailing dam and the toxic sediments behind it. Our success created thousands of jobs. We started to understand the power and promise of a restoration economy and saw how restoring the landscape restores community.

Senator Tester asked me to join his new Senate staff shortly after, to bring people together around tough issues. On day one, his chief of staff said to all of us: “The election is over. The Senator wants to be clear. We work for all Montanans, not just the ones who voted for us.”

And so we did, solving problems regardless of party, finding solutions right for the land and the people who inhabit it. That’s how we forged partnerships with loggers. That’s how we broke the decades old wilderness stalemate. By listening. By working together.

I took that spirit with me when Governor Bullock asked me to serve as the Director of the Department of Environmental Quality, safeguarding our clean air and water. The job required listening, gathering facts and being decisive – not jumping to conclusions. It required trusting career staffers with decades of experience and getting them tools they needed to do their jobs.

Then the governor asked me to be his chief of staff. Montana had about 11,000 state employees, roughly the same as the Bureau of Land Management. It was a fast-paced, all-in job that required listening, calm, and the ability to gather facts and act on them. I loved it.

Governor Bullock, like my boss before him, was unequivocal about the need to work with all parties to get things done. That’s how, for example, we got healthcare for 90,000 Montanans through the legislature, and how we achieved a water compact for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes that this body passed last November with leadership from Senators Daines and Tester.

All along, my professional life has been informed by a private passion for hiking, floating, hunting, and backpacking. The power I am granted by the mountains and rivers I love is ineffable but real. This rare privilege has left me fiercely committed to ensure everyone, and future generations, shares the same opportunity.

That’s why I have spent the last four years at the National Wildlife Federation, advocating for the balanced use of our public lands and Congressional investment in them.

I think every step of my career has prepared me for this role.

The Bureau of Land Management is tasked with the daunting mission to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of our public lands. The Bureau manages these lands for multiple uses and multiple values – for present and future generations.

Those uses range from energy development to recreation, from grazing and timber to scientific and cultural resources, and from critical minerals mining to wildlife habitat.

There is a lot of work to do. President Biden has called on the country to build the equitable, clean energy economy of tomorrow. He has called on us to conserve and restore lands to address the crises of biodiversity and climate change. He has been clear about the need to

engage everyone, not just the privileged or special interests, and to ensure nature is accessible to all of us.

The BLM manages roughly 1 in 10 acres in this country. It can and must help us rise to this historic moment.

If confirmed, I will listen, and I will seek to work with all, regardless of party. That's how we find durable solutions. By working together.

I thank you for the time and look forward to the discussion today.