

**Statement of
Dr. Monica C. Regalbuto**

**Nominee to be
Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management
U.S. Department of Energy**

**Before the
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
May 13, 2014**

Chair Landrieu, Ranking Member Murkowski, Members of the Committee: I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for Assistant Secretary for Environmental Management at the United States Department of Energy.

I would like to begin my statement by expressing my gratitude to the President for the confidence in me that he has demonstrated in his nomination. I am honored, and humbled to be here, and should I be confirmed, I will do my best to meet that confidence.

I would also like to thank Secretary Moniz for his support and for his leadership of the Department of Energy.

Professional achievement is seldom an individual effort. I have had the privilege of working with a multitude of talented people throughout my career as a chemical engineer. There are countless family members, friends, mentors and colleagues who have done so much over the years to make this day possible.

I want to especially thank and recognize my husband John for always being supportive and patient and to my adult children, Ricky, Carol, and Robby for their sense of humor as they grew up in a hybrid culture, where they learned my unique daily use of science-based "Spanglish." Lastly, I would not be here without the loving support of my parents, Horacio and Conchita, for instilling in me great values during my childhood and for my parents-in-law, John and Carole, whom I consider my second set of parents.

Madam Chair, I began my studies in Mexico where through the great economic sacrifice of my family, I attended private schools which offered a better education. In high school, I discovered an intense interest and gift in math and science, and started college seeking a degree in chemical engineering and computer science at Monterrey Tech (ITESM). At the time there were very few women in engineering with limited job opportunities. This reality has heavily

influenced me, and as such I have always supported and led efforts that substantially enhanced employment of and opportunities for women and minorities. I met my husband John while I was a student and eventually married him and moved to the United States and proudly acquired my U.S. citizenship.

After completing my Ph.D. at the University of Notre Dame, I joined Argonne National Laboratory in 1988. I started my career supporting the development of technologies for the treatment of high-level waste at the Department of Energy plutonium production sites. After developing strong technical skills, I joined BP-AMOCO in 1996, where I enhanced my skills at managing complex projects, large budgets and a multi-disciplinary staff in an industrial setting. I returned to Argonne in 2001, and became the Head of the Process Chemistry and Engineering Department where I worked on new technologies for the treatment of used nuclear fuel.

In addition, I was invited by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to be part of its three-year Fuel Cycle Study Team. The study was published in 2010 and considers economics, risk, nonproliferation, institutional structures and technology readiness in meeting U.S. energy and environmental needs. My participation in the study not only allowed me to gain experience working with high level officials and nongovernment organizations, but brought to my attention the need for the safe, permanent disposal of all types of radioactive wastes.

In 2008, I had the unique opportunity to join DOE's Office of Environmental Management, where I served as a senior program manager supporting their strategic mission in the waste processing area.

I currently serve as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fuel Cycle Technologies within the Office of Nuclear Energy. In this position I am responsible for directing the research and development program involving 10 national laboratories, 32 universities, over 400 scientists and 300 professors.

The last few years have been an eventful period with respect to nuclear energy. I was directly involved in providing and coordinating emergency responses to the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant disaster. I assembled a multi-office team within DOE to evaluate potential near-term options to mitigate the highly contaminated water in Japan's plant resulting from the emergency cooling of reactors damaged by the earthquake and subsequent tsunami.

Over the past few decades, I have studied our various nuclear waste management programs from a variety of vantage points. As a scientist at Argonne, I have worked on and led efforts to identify technical solutions to difficult waste management issues. In my current role, I have been responsible for formulating and articulating strategic options to expedite the resolution of waste management issues. I have also experienced the intricacies of nuclear waste management from the perspective of a waste generator and from a waste disposal specialist.

during my time at DOE. One of Nation's biggest challenges remains to ensure the public that the government is able to fulfill its responsibility regarding the timely handling and cleanup of the nuclear waste originated from both its defense and civilian programs.

Madam Chair, the Manhattan Project was a critical component of our success in World War II and the Cold War. The communities and regions that were home to these sites have made sacrifices for our Nation, and the cleanup mission of the Environmental Management program is both a legal and moral obligation.

2014 marks the 25th anniversary of the EM program. During my time at Argonne National Laboratory and now at DOE, I have watched as EM completed 91 sites and has made significant progress at the remaining 16. The Environmental Management program has before it some of the most complex, challenging cleanup work, and accomplishing our goals will mean applying innovative strategies to one-of-a-kind challenges – all while ensuring that work is completed safely.

I believe my background, experience and commitment have prepared me to lead the Office of Environmental Management during this particularly critical time and I welcome the opportunity to continue my service to the Nation as Assistant Secretary for EM. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee and others in the Congress to ensure that we continue the safe cleanup of the environmental legacy.

Madam Chair, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you and your committee today. I look forward to answering any questions you and the committee may have.