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OPENING STATEMENT TO THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

Chairman Boxer, Ranking Member Vitter, distinguished members of the committee; I am honored to come before you today as President Obama's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Economic Development. I want to express my appreciation for the time that you and your staff afforded me to meet with you during the past few weeks. It was valuable to gain insight into our mutual goals of promoting economic vibrancy in your respective states and across the country.

To Senators Brown and Portman, thank for your service to the great State of Ohio. I appreciated your support during my time as Mayor of the City of Youngstown. We are better off as a result of your efforts to put pragmatism over partisanship when it comes to the interests of your constituents and this county.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge my family who has joined me here today; my mother, who is the source of anything I've been able to accomplish, my wife who's love and support is beyond what I deserve, and our son Ethan who has made being a parent, the single greatest joy of my life.

I come here today with a perspective of economic development that has been shaped by almost twenty years of experience working both in the public and private sector. I was born, reared, and forged in a community that was once the poster child of economic decline and devastation; a community that was ravaged by the collapse of manufacturing and lack of economic diversity.

Yet, I am proud to tell you, that this very same community is experiencing a renaissance, a renewal beyond what most would have thought possible. Through a combination of visioning, planning, public/private partnerships and investments, and most importantly a determined citizenry, Youngstown, OH, is redefining itself.

Over the course of the past five years there has been well over \$1 billion in private investment in the City of Youngstown, resulting the creation several hundred high quality jobs. One crowning example of this renaissance is Vallourec Star, an international corporation which decided to expand in Youngstown. Vallourec Star manufactures seamless steel tubes and pipes used in oil and gas exploration, which by the way is also contributing to the President's "all of the above" strategy to decrease our nation's dependence on foreign sources of oil.

The City of Youngstown was named a top ten destination to start a business by Entrepreneur Magazine. Site Selection Magazine ranked the Youngstown-Warren region in the top ten nationally, for the most new and expanded corporate facilities, with populations between 200,000 and 1 million. The City laid claim to the first National Manufacturing Institute. Youngstown State University is ranked highly by

Forbes and Washington Monthly's College Guide, among others. Youngstown is home to one of the best start-up incubators in the world, and is leading the nation in export growth.

Without question, the City of Youngstown still faces problems and challenges, like many communities across this nation. However, Youngstown is no longer being defined solely by those problems as it had been for so many decades. Youngstown is also helping to establish a blueprint for other similarly situated communities, fighting to build sustainable economies, rife with economic opportunity.

The Economic Development Administration has a vital role in facilitating the economic transformation of these communities. Jobs aren't created by politicians or government agencies. However, EDA and others agencies, do play an important role in helping to shape the economic environment.

It is within this environment, that private capital is put at risk by entrepreneurs whether in manufacturing, technology, or providing goods and services, that ultimately creates jobs. The public sector also plays a crucial role in investing in infrastructure, promoting innovation, and encouraging regional cooperation, which likewise boosts private sector job creation.

I've had the privilege to engage communities across this county from Alameda County, CA to Shreveport, LA. From Flint MI to Gary, IN and Quad Cities, IA just to name a few. I have witnessed both the economic struggles and successes in these communities. Without fail, those regions that are undergoing positive economic transformation have successfully leveraged public/private partnerships. This approach is at the core of the mission of the Economic Development Administration.

Over the last five years, we've worked to clear away the rubble of the greatest economic recession this country has seen since the great depression. While significant progress has been made, there is still a lot of work to be done. I can't think of a better place to continue that important work than from EDA.

In an environment of scarce resources, it becomes ever more important that our investments be strategic and catalytic. We must help create an environment in which the principles of free and fair market capitalism reward those entrepreneurs who take risks, respect those workers who provide the goods and services, and increases the quality of life in the communities we call home.

The mission of the Economic Development Administration – leading the federal economic development agenda, promoting innovation, and preparing American communities for growth and success in our global economy – is one that demands nothing short of excellence, accountability, and measurable outcomes in its execution.

If I am fortunate enough to garner the support of this committee and if confirmed by the full Senate, I will work with you and your colleagues, and the committed professionals at EDA to maintain the confidence of the people that we serve.

Chairman Boxer, thank you again for the opportunity to address this Committee. I look forward to your questions.