

**Statement of Michael S. Regan**  
**Nominee for the Position of Administrator of the**  
**United States Environmental Protection Agency**  
**Before the**  
**Committee on Environment and Public Works**  
**United States Senate**  
**February 3, 2021**

Thank you, Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and Members of the Committee. I am grateful for your time this afternoon and our shared commitment to protecting our environment, our communities and our economy. I have dedicated my career to public service, and I appreciate the opportunity to highlight my qualifications and passion for environmental stewardship, public health, and economic opportunity.

I want to thank Senator Burr and Senator Tillis for their kind words of introduction. I want to thank President Biden for nominating me and trusting me to lead this important Agency during such a vital time in our nation's history. I especially want to thank my wonderful wife Melvina, who I am blessed to have as a true partner as we navigate life together and my son Matthew who I am so proud of and consider it a privilege to be his dad. Together, we prayed as a family before accepting this nomination and we are so proud to take on this assignment. I am grateful for their support.

For the last four years I have served as the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ). It is an honor to serve the great people of my home state, working to provide all North Carolinians with cleaner air and water while nurturing our state's economic growth.

I fell in love with the outdoors while growing up in eastern North Carolina, hunting and fishing with my father and grandfather. Those beautiful waters and land are a legacy they were proud to share with me, but also taught me that protecting them was my responsibility as well.

My father and grandfather used to say that farmers are the original conservationists. Like millions of Americans living in rural communities, preserving our natural resources isn't something to balance with economic growth. It's one of the keys to economic growth, along with protecting public health and our way of life.

It wasn't long before I truly understood that careful stewardship of our environment is more than just passing down traditions to the next generation. It's about learning from the past and being prepared to combat the challenges that future generations will face.

Both of my parents were dedicated public servants. My mother was a nurse for close to 30 years. My father attended North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University, served his country in Vietnam, worked for the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service for years, and ultimately retired as a Colonel with the North Carolina National Guard.

After graduating from my father's alma mater with a degree in environmental science, I knew I wanted to find a way to serve and that led to my first summer internship with the EPA. I spent nearly ten years working at EPA under presidents of both parties, and it is the honor of a lifetime to be asked to return.

Throughout my career, I've learned that if you want to address complex challenges, you must first be able to see them from all sides and you must be willing to put yourself in other people's shoes.

The best way to do that is by convening stakeholders where they live, work and serve, fostering an open dialogue rooted in a respect for science, a clear understanding of the law, and a commitment to building consensus around pragmatic solutions. I have also learned that we can't simply regulate our way out of every problem we face.

This approach has proven to be effective during my time as the Secretary of DEQ. We've tackled adverse impacts from hog farms, cleaned up toxic PFAS pollution in our rivers, and reached the largest coal-ash cleanup agreement in U.S. history.

I will never forget looking into the eyes of Amy Brown, the mother of two boys, as she told me she could not let her sons play in the bathtub or the pool in the backyard for years because they were required to live on bottled water after the Dan River coal ash spill. That night as I gave my son Matthew his bath with fresh tap water, I vowed this story would have a happier ending for Amy and her two sons. We did that by looking at the science, following the law and bringing industries together with the affected communities – not as adversaries but as stakeholders working together for real solutions.

In North Carolina, we are moving beyond the old argument that we must pit creating jobs against protecting the environment. We've demonstrated that you can do this from the mountains to the coast and everywhere in between. These two values are not mutually exclusive, they can go hand in hand.

President Biden has said that confronting climate change presents an unprecedented economic opportunity. In North Carolina, we've seized that opportunity, partnering with the private sector to provide regulatory certainty and harnessing our strength in manufacturing, innovation, and research which resulted in the creation of tens of thousands of much-needed new jobs. If confirmed, I will work with the entire Administration to build and strengthen those partnerships to power America's economy with cleaner energy and create millions of good-paying middle-class jobs.

This Administration's priorities for environmental protection are clear. We will restore the roles of science and transparency at EPA, and support the talented, dedicated career officials. We will move with a sense of urgency on climate change. We will stand up for environmental justice and equity.

And we will do it in a collaborative manner, in partnership with state and local governments who know their own communities better than the federal government ever could. We will work transparently with responsible industries eager to establish clear, consistent rules of the road. We will collaborate with innovative businesses well-positioned to help solve problems. We will engage working Americans whose voices have been absent from the conversation about our environment for too long. And, finally, we will do this work in partnership with Congress, leveraging your expertise and concerns for your constituents as we strive to build healthier communities through environmental stewardship and economic growth.

We all have a stake in the health of our environment, the strength of our economy, the well-being of our communities, and the legacy we will leave to the next generation in the form of our nation's natural resources.

And while those values may not unite us on every single question of policy, I think it's a pretty solid foundation for a successful partnership.

I look forward to building upon that foundation with you all, if confirmed, and to answering your questions today.