

Statement of Brenda Mallory
Nominee for the Position of Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality
Before the Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
March 3, 2021

Good morning Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and Members of the Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the nominee for the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality.

It is the greatest privilege of my professional life and a blessing in my personal life that President Biden has nominated me for this important position on his environmental team. I want to thank President Biden for this nomination, and for trusting me to lead CEQ.

Thank you to Senator Blumenthal for his kind introduction. I also want to thank the Members of this Committee and their staff who took the time to meet with me prior to this hearing. I thoroughly enjoyed – and learned from – every one of our conversations.

Finally, I want to thank my family, friends, and colleagues for all the support and encouragement, with special gratitude to my husband, Mark Schneider, and my three children, Rachel, Alex, and Leslie, who give added purpose to all that I do.

Since President Biden announced his intention to nominate me for this role, I have reflected on the journey that brought me to this moment and the service I can provide the American people, if I am fortunate enough to gain your support and be confirmed. My humble beginnings in the city of Waterbury, Connecticut did not lead me to expect this moment, but they did teach me that through hard work and commitment, faith and resilience, and with the strong support of family and community, the unimaginable becomes possible.

I am sorry that my parents did not live to see this moment. In their own way, they left an indelible mark through their service to family, church, and community. I sit here as an embodiment of their values.

First, I strive to bring the best I have to offer to every situation: I have always taken great pride in finding ways to make a difference wherever I am. In private practice, that meant helping my clients – companies, cities, and trade associations – navigate complex federal and state permitting processes. In government and in the non-profit sector that has meant pursuing common ground for practical solutions.

Second, I believe in the dignity of every person: Both professionally and in my volunteer activities, I have worked to advance policies that recognize our common humanity and are designed to ensure that all people are treated with respect and can have access to clean air, clean water, and toxic-free environments.

And third, I believe in working collaboratively with all stakeholders around common goals: Throughout my career, I have worked effectively with Republicans and Democrats, business leaders and community advocates, and federal, state, and local governments.

These are the hallmarks of my life and career that I will bring in service of the Council on Environmental Quality and the American people.

If I am confirmed, I will work to ensure that federal environmental laws work for all people no matter where they live or who they voted for. I will work to demonstrate that we can protect our environment, create jobs, and grow our economy. I will ensure that CEQ plays its role leading on environmental and natural resources policy across the federal government and listening – truly listening – as we try to find solutions that serve the public interest.

Among other things, I will work with all stakeholders to advance efficient permitting approaches that also examine the environmental consequences and engage affected communities.

I will see that CEQ's expertise is applied to the challenge of reducing greenhouse gas emissions and to helping communities to prepare for the increased flooding, more frequent hurricanes and wildfires, and other impacts of climate change that are already occurring.

Finally, I will ensure that the voices of the poor and the powerless – from the most rural parts of America to our biggest cities – are heard as we tackle the environmental and public health crises the nation faces.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Capito, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you. I am happy to answer any questions, and I look forward to working with you and other Members of Congress, should I have the honor of being confirmed.