

Chairman Inhofe, Senator Cardin, members of the Environment and Public Works Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss my qualifications for the position of Federal Co-Chair of the Northern Borders Regional Commission (“NBRC”).

I would like to start by thanking the President for nominating me for this position, and to Governor Chris Sununu for his recommendation. I would also like to extend my deepest thanks to Senator Jeanne Shaheen for introducing me here today. Finally, I would like to thank Senator Maggie Hassan, and Senator John Sununu, and all those who have submitted letters of support on my behalf. I am overwhelmed with gratitude for the support I have received.

The President’s submission of my nomination and my appearance here today is one of the great honors in my career of public service, a career which includes being a staff member for Senator John Sununu in this chamber and eight years of service in the United States House of Representatives.

I want to focus my opening testimony today on answering three fundamental questions that I believe any nominee for any position should be prepared to answer: (1) Why do I want to be the Federal Co-Chair of NBRC?; (2) What are my qualifications for the position of Federal Co-Chair of NBRC?; and (3) What is my vision for the position of Federal Co-Chair of NBRC?

I grew up in the territory covered by the Northern Border Regional Commission. I saw firsthand what happened when the pulp and paper economy collapsed and how it devastated entire communities and generations of workers and businesses.

Over the decades since then, I have seen generations of dedicated elected officials work to help find economic solutions for these communities. We have been through multiple iterations of new strategies and plans. The result is what we all are painfully aware of: there are no easy solutions. The challenge we face in these regions is cultural, it is generational, it is demographic, and most of all it is complex.

Another lesson that I have taken from this experience is that the four states of the Northern Border region face very similar problems and challenges. This entire region was the center of a vibrant mill economy across millions of acres of forest. Now all four states face new realities of declining populations, slowly recovering rural economies, and aging infrastructure.

Providing the leadership and resources to help find a path forward for these communities across the four-state Northern Border region is exactly what the Northern Border Regional Commission is tasked with. Given my own personal experience and knowledge of how the NBRC can help, and how it has helped, is what excites me most about the opportunity here before me.

I want to contribute to an agency that has helped the people of the region by providing financial resources that have a quick and direct impact on the communities. I see this position as an opportunity to give back to my home region, by providing leadership and vision to help start the next chapter of deploying the NBRC’s financial and technical resources that help increase economic diversity across northern New York, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine and working to enable communities in those states to chart a path forward of their own choosing. I am prepared to focus my passion and energy to use the resources of the

federal government as a partner to state and local decisionmakers as they chart their path forward to build communities that represent places where the next generation will want to live and work, much as was the case generations ago before the mills were built.

My career brings a vantage point that comes from experience in both public service and the private sector. When I was right out of university I was a part-time police officer in the Town of Durham, New Hampshire. Later I moved into real estate, becoming an agent in my hometown of Wolfeboro. During this time my other career in politics/public service started with volunteering on congressional races. As any young campaign staffer does in New Hampshire, I went on to become a staff member during the 1996 presidential campaign which led to a position on Congressman John E. Sununu's first congressional staff later that year.

Early on my portfolio started to consolidate around the issues of law enforcement (and later, Homeland Security), New Hampshire-Canadian trade, and international relations in New England. I eventually became the Director of the Outreach Program that allowed myself and other staff members to travel around the state and meet with public officials, business owners, and citizens. It was the Outreach Program that allowed me to gain experience with grant research, coalition building on issues, and working for communities that needed help. One of my strengths is that I don't take the first "no" as the final answer; I like to keep working to try and find solutions to help individuals.

All total, I worked for Congressman, then Senator, John E. Sununu for 12 years. I continued to gain experience in my issue areas. From 2011 to 2013 I worked for Congressman Charles F. Bass of New Hampshire. I started as Outreach Director and was later given the second title of Projects Director, which was an in-depth experience in dealing with local and business affected by or seeking help from the federal government.

While I was in federal service I also served my hometown by being elected to the Planning Board (I was subsequently elected chairman) and Budget Committee. It was on the Budget Committee, where we handle the town's \$25 million a year line item budget, that I began to see how if structured correctly, the Government could partner with private enterprise to make investments that lead to economic growth.

In 2014 I was elected to the New Hampshire House of Representatives where I served on the Executive Departments and Administration Committee; Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee; and the Fish and Game Committee. I was also appointed to the New Hampshire-Canada Trade Council by the New Hampshire Secretary of State and was a representative of the New Hampshire House to the Council of State Governments.

I resigned from the New Hampshire House in January of 2017 to join the staff of Governor Chris Sununu. I started as Policy Advisor and was later promoted to become Special Assistant to the Governor for Intergovernmental Affairs. My portfolio was similar to my federal service, with the added area of transportation infrastructure. I am Governor Sununu's representative to the Coalition of Northeastern Governors where we work with the Eastern Canadian Premiers on interstate and cross-border issues of transportation, trade, economic development, and the environment.

I believe my public service career in New Hampshire and the Northeast, at both the federal and state level, has prepared me to be Federal Co-chair of the Northern Border Regional Commission.

I believe in outreach to the governments of Ontario, Quebec, and New Brunswick, our neighbors, and partners of the intertwined economies of the Northeast. In the 2008 law that set up the NBRC, crossing the international border to advocate for the Commission's region was recognized. While doing my research for this position, I identified gaps in using Canadian contacts and that opportunities to cross the border was not being utilized. With Canadian companies looking for business opportunities across the border, I believe that the NBRC should be a partner with its member states to explore the possibility for expansion of Canadian companies into the northern tier. I had the privilege of organizing Governor Sununu's first trade mission to Montreal, Quebec, which has resulted in New Hampshire having an aggressive economic outreach to Quebec and Canada by New Hampshire. The individual states have been going to Canada successfully for business recruitment; I believe a regional entity could back them up and make the regional case. It adds a new level of diversity to the NBRC portfolio and provides another avenue for increasing opportunity and economic diversity for our workers.

I have worked for more than two decades on the issues that affect the northern tier. I will work to continue the progress made by my predecessors, and my goal is to expand economic diversity and leave the Commission stronger and ready to face future challenges.

Chairman Inhofe, Senator Cardin, and members of the Committee, I truly appreciate this opportunity to appear before you. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.