

Prepared Statement of Katherine A. Lemos, Nominated as Chairperson and Member of the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board

Thank you, Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper, and distinguished members of the Committee. It is an honor to appear before you today as the President's nominee to be Chairperson and Member of the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB).

I am grateful to President Trump for the confidence he has placed in me to lead the CSB through a period of transition and growth.

Before going further, I would like to introduce my husband, Carlos, and my parents, John and Laura.

Mr. Chairman, the chemical industry is vital to our economy and national well-being. Maintaining integrity in our chemical production, process, handling and storage is therefore essential to the health of our nation.

The CSB's mandate is to investigate accidental chemical releases at fixed facilities that result in a fatality, serious injury or substantial property damage. Through the course of investigations and conducting preventive research, the CSB makes recommendations for improvement to a range of stakeholders to reduce the likelihood of future events.

I'm here before you today because I'm a Safety Professional deeply committed to the well-being of people and our environment, I believe the CSB has a critical role to play in these safety outcomes, and my experience and objectives are in strong alignment with that required to lead the CSB.

Prioritizing safety was a part of my childhood. Leading this commitment was my father, a military pilot for the Air Force and Air National Guard, followed by a 35-year career as a commercial airline pilot. When I started flight lessons at the age of 14, he insisted that I subscribe to the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) Reporter, a monthly magazine that exposed me to numerous examples of "what went wrong" and lessons learned.

In my career I've been privileged to work as a safety leader across stakeholder communities, permitting an enterprise level understanding of safety.

As an academic, I studied new technology and decision-making in high-risk and complex environments, and I taught on the topics of accident investigation, human factors engineering and safety management systems.

As a career government employee for the NTSB, I first served as an accident investigator on the front lines of aviation safety. I also served as Special Assistant to the Vice Chairman of the Board, supporting review and critical decisions on investigations and recommendations across transportation modes.

Our launch to a pipeline explosion in Mississippi was instrumental in my appreciating the similarities across domains in accident investigation, human factors, safety management principles, and the long-lasting impact of catastrophic events.

As a career government employee for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), I served as the regulator in analyzing, developing, and implementing policy, as well as monitoring the outcomes. This provided a unique experience in visualizing and quantifying the entire life cycle of a system, from research to design, prototype testing, engineering, manufacturing, and on to implementation and sustainment.

Now in industry, I'm an executive charged with balancing competing pressures for multiple programs, developing and delivering quality products and systems that perform as promised, on schedule, within budget – and above all, safely.

In summary, my combined experiences across the safety landscape allow me to be effective at promoting and ensuring the balance needed and brought by each stakeholder.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I look forward to working with you to enable and empower the CSB to fulfill its mission to prevent chemical accidents and maintain the trust and confidence of the public we serve.

If confirmed, I commit to leading the agency by example, and to holding myself and each employee accountable to you and to the American public in delivering objective, thorough, and timely investigative reports to protect workers and our communities.

If confirmed, I pledge to work in a collaborative manner with board members, staff, stakeholders and this committee to enhance the safety culture of the chemical industry.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to answering your questions.