

Statement of Jennifer Beth Sass
Nominee for Member, Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board
Before the
Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Subcommittee on Chemical Safety, Waste Management, Environmental Justice, and
Regulatory Oversight
July 29, 2021

Chairman Merkley, Ranking Member Wicker, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for your consideration of my nomination for the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board. I am honored to be nominated by President Biden, and – should I be confirmed – to have the opportunity to take up public service as a member of the Board.

With me today is my son, Nathan, and his girlfriend, Christina, both now living in California, and my husband, Michael.

My father, who now lives in Canada, served in the U.S. Military, as did all his brothers, before going on to graduate studies at Cornell University in the field of occupational health and safety, and eventually government health and safety work. I credit my parents with instilling in my brother and me a strong work ethic, integrity, and commitment to public service.

I am a senior scientist at the Natural Resources Defense Council, where for the past two decades I have worked to advance policies and practices to better protect the health and safety of American families in all the places that they live, learn, work, and play. I provide policy strategy, scientific review, and oversight of materials generated in our work to characterize the potential impacts of chemicals on human health and the environment.

My work also informs decision-makers and stakeholders, including: chemical manufacturers; product manufacturers and other downstream businesses that use chemicals; retailers; academic researchers; doctors and other health care workers; outdoor fishing, hunting, and recreation enthusiasts; and, others. On an almost daily basis, I engage in risk analysis, help formulate environmental health strategies, and work to build successful networks and partnerships across diverse stakeholders and interests.

In addition to my work at the Natural Resources Defense Council, I have a part-time faculty position at George Washington University, in the Department of Environmental and Occupational Health. Last year I was awarded a departmental commendation for teaching excellence. In addition to teaching graduate-level science policy classes, I provide scientific peer review for numerous professional journals, and have published over 50 articles in scientific journals.

I have also served on federal science advisory committees, including the National Toxicology Program's Board of Science Counselors, and as a member of the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology workgroup to evaluate the federal nanotechnology strategy. In both cases, my time on these committees has resulted in establishing effective working relationships

with experts from government, academia, and the private sector, based on honest, respectful engagement, open communication, and transparent information sharing.

The Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board is both a scientific and a policy agency. The role of the agency is to make effective recommendations to prevent future similar incidences. It must gather all relevant information from the facility under investigation, industry and trade associations, subject matter experts, the community, workers, other agencies, elected officials, and others. To be successful, the Board needs to maintain positive relationships with all stakeholders, to ensure that accurate information is gathered in a timely manner.

Congress has made it clear that the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board has bipartisan support when it functions well and accomplishes its mandate to deliver timely reports and meaningful recommendations that support prevention strategies.

I am confident that I will be successful in carrying out my duties as a member of the Board, to support its mission, should you deem me worthy of the task.

Thank you