

Statement of David Patrick Ross
Nominated to be Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
September 20th, 2017

Chairman Barrasso, Senator Carper and distinguished members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Water within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. I want to thank President Trump and Administrator Pruitt for placing their trust in me and for providing me with this amazing opportunity to serve the public in such a critical role. I also want to thank my family for their incredible support and encouragement as I continue my career in public service.

I have worked on water quality and resource management issues my entire career. I pursued a career in environmental law and policy after growing up paddling the Boundary Waters and other lakes and streams with my father and friends, and have stayed that course my entire professional career. My experience ranges from serving as a consultant on wastewater reclamation and reuse projects, to advising members of the regulated community on Clean Water Act and related matters, to serving as the lead water quality attorney for the State of Wyoming and as the lead environmental prosecutor for the State of Wisconsin. I therefore understand water resource issues from multiple perspectives, and have a deep appreciation for the complexity inherent in managing our nation's waters.

Our waterways helped transform the nation into an economic power, and continue to support economic activity that sustains our position in the world. They move commerce, supply power, provide drinking water, sustain wildlife, grow crops, and welcome recreational uses of all kinds. These competing uses highlight the critical importance of our

nation's water resources, but result in divergent views on how best to manage those resources. The Office of Water must consider and balance those diverse perspectives while pursuing important common objectives: protecting and enhancing the quality of our waters; ensuring that our citizens have access to safe and reliable drinking water; and promoting regulatory certainty for the regulated community.

I will pursue those objectives based on a few core principles. First, we must manage our nation's waters within the statutory framework established by Congress while respecting the constitutional limitations imposed by our founding fathers. If I have a bias as a lawyer, it is a profound respect for the rule of law.

Second, I will respect the role of states, tribes and local governments as key partners in managing our nation's waters. I have been fortunate to observe firsthand the expertise and professionalism of state environmental officials and their dedication to the protection of the natural resources they know best. I have also witnessed the frustration those experts experience when the federal government fails to engage with them on matters of critical importance to the states. Should I be confirmed, I will embrace cooperative federalism as envisioned by Congress when enacting many of the statutes that govern the work of EPA.

Third, I will manage with an open mind. I will seek the input and expertise of the dedicated career professionals at EPA, I will listen to the advice and recommendations of the regulated community and other members of the public, I will engage with the states, tribes and local governments, and I will pursue the objectives of my management with dedication while always striving to give them my best counsel.

The nation has made great progress improving the quality of our waters over the past 50 years. There is certainly more work to do, but I am confident that we can continue to

make progress while pursuing the twin goals of environmental protection and economic prosperity for the nation. Indeed, to be successful, I believe those goals are and must be interdependent.

Thank you for your time today and the opportunity to appear. I look forward to answering any questions you may have, and to working collaboratively with members of this Committee and your colleagues in both chambers should I have the honor of being confirmed.