

Statement of
Gina McCarthy
Nominee for the Position of
Administrator of the
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Before the
Environment and Public Works Committee
United States Senate
April 11, 2013

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Please allow me to express my appreciation to you, and Ranking Member Vitter for holding this hearing; Senator Warren, Senator Cowan for your kind introductions; and Members of this Committee for the time that you have spent with me, both since I was nominated and during the years I served in my current position with the Environmental Protection Agency. I am grateful for the commitment and passion for serving the American people that we share and that comes across so clearly in your discussions with me.

Also, I'd like to take a moment to thank my family – my husband, Ken McCarey, and my sister Elaine who are seated behind me. Their support for me and my work in public service has been an unfailing source of energy and inspiration.

I'm deeply honored that President Obama has nominated me to lead the Environmental Protection Agency. Having spent my entire career in public service, I know of no higher privilege than leading the Agency and working with partners to ensure that the American public can breathe clean air, drink clean water and live, learn and play in safe communities.

The mission of EPA is clear – to “Protect Human Health and the Environment” – and I take that direction very seriously. When the EPA was created in 1970, the country was in a state of environmental crisis: air pollution was visible to the naked eye, rivers were on fire and contaminated land languished. In the past 40 years, we have made dramatic progress that gives us much to celebrate: our air, land and water are, today, significantly cleaner and safer. That progress has gone hand in hand with long-term economic growth and prosperity.

This record of success provides confidence that we can meet the very real and significant challenges we still face – in ensuring that no American's health is threatened by pollution and

that future generations can live in a cleaner, safer world while enjoying an even more prosperous economy.

To that end, I know that many Members agree that we must ensure that the increasingly complex chemicals in the products that we use are safe. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working with the Members of this Committee – from both sides of the aisle – to re-authorize our antiquated chemical-safety laws so that they provide a clear, fair set of rules for industry and certainty for consumers that their products are safe.

We must ensure that water – so critical to human health, quality of life and economic activity – is protected from dangerous contaminants, including new, emerging ones. If I am confirmed, I look forward to working with Members on this Committee to ensure that EPA's use of science in protecting water quality is rigorous and transparent – and that we are effectively helping our state and local partners as they shoulder their share of the mission to preserve and improve the nation's water quality.

As the President has made clear, we must take steps to combat climate change. This is one of the greatest challenges of our generation and our great obligation to future generations. I am convinced that those steps can and must be pursued with common sense. And I firmly believe they can produce not only benefits for public health, but also create markets for emerging and new technologies and new jobs. We have already seen that the greenhouse gas and fuel economy standards for cars and other light duty vehicles will save American families more than \$1.7 trillion dollars in fuel costs and the American economy 12 billion barrels of oil and will eliminate 6 billion metric tons of carbon pollution – all while addressing a major source of greenhouse gas emissions.

Those standards reflect the joint work of states, the automobile industry and labor, as well as the federal government. They offer a first-rate illustration of a key lesson that my long career in public service has taught me: that environmental protections do not come solely out of government or out of Washington D.C. – they happen in our States and in our cities, and in our businesses, through innovation and through the initiatives of regular people taking common sense steps to make their factories run better, their products perform better and their communities better places to live.

I've seen this work up close and personal. Prior to coming to EPA, I spent over two decades working at the State and municipal level. I've been involved in running the environmental offices for Connecticut and Massachusetts, in addition to running a variety of local government programs and partnerships. In fact, Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee, I marked over 25 rewarding years in public service, before joining the federal government for the first time in 2009, when I came to Washington to head the EPA's Office of Air and Radiation.

What I've learned from my experience at the state and local level is that environmental protection is not partisan. I've worked for Republicans, I've worked for Democrats and I've worked with those who, frankly, could care less about party affiliation, and who simply care about rolling up their sleeves and figuring out how to move forward in a common sense, responsible manner that is consistent with the law, and with the science. Fortunately for public

health and environmental protection, this group makes up the majority of civil servants and the majority of the American people.

It has been a privilege to serve, for the past four years, as EPA's Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation. We have attempted to make adherence to the law and to sound science the twin guideposts of our work and we have turned, again and again, to the public, to the states and to business, and to environmental stakeholders, in order to ensure that we are working with the best information available and with a full understanding of the needs and interests of all of those affected by the regulations we have issued.

During my tenure at the EPA, I'm very proud of the work that we've undertaken. In addition to the historic greenhouse gas and fuel economy standards, we have issued Mercury and Air Toxics Standards for power plants. The pollution reductions resulting from these standards will save up to 11,000 lives and prevent thousands of heart attacks, asthma attacks, emergency room visits and hospital admissions, which are worth up to \$90 billion in avoided health impacts to American families. Between the time the standards were proposed and the time they were issued in final form, I and my staff worked tirelessly with utilities, grid operators, states, environmental organizations and the public to craft the solutions needed not just to make the standards technically correct, but to make complying with the standards practical and workable for the utility industry and the power sector overall. We understood that we had to ensure that those public health and economic benefits could be achieved while maintaining the affordable and reliable electricity that literally powers our economy.

Also, during these past four years, one of the most dramatic and potentially beneficial changes that our energy markets and overall economy has seen has come in the steep growth in the production and use of natural gas, thanks especially to the widespread use of hydraulic fracturing. During this same time, the EPA was called on to set air pollution standards in the oil and gas sector that included, for the first time, emissions from hydraulically "fracked" natural gas production wells. In setting out to develop those standards, we listened carefully to the companies large and small that drill and operate production wells – as well as to the states and communities that both benefit from the production and are affected by the emissions. We did our best to be good listeners, and the resulting standards adopted the best practices already in use by leading companies and states, provided the time the industry needed to come into compliance, and offered a streamlined approach to permitting that was adapted to the unique needs of fracking operations and avoided duplication with already existing state permitting and reporting.

As a result, the standards will result in more sellable product in the pipeline for companies while reducing up to 290,000 tons of harmful volatile organic compound emissions – and a side-benefit of reducing methane emissions equivalent to 33 million metric tons of carbon dioxide – without slowing down oil and gas development. I have done my best to keep my door open to businesses, environmental advocates, local communities, the states, tribes, labor and the public at large. As a result, I have been rewarded time and again, with information and insights that have led to the development of smarter, more cost-effective rules, and better designed and implemented policies and programs to build partnerships and enhance collaboration. Central to all my efforts has been a clear recognition that the EPA must work hand in hand with states, local communities and tribes if we are to make continued progress in our common goal of protecting public health and

the environment while growing the economy – especially in times like these when resources are so limited and the challenges we face together are so complex. If I am fortunate enough to be confirmed as EPA Administrator, I intend to keep my door and my mind open, and look forward to working closely with all Members of this Committee as well as stakeholders, businesses and communities across the country.

Again, thank you, Madam Chairman, and thank you distinguished Members of this Committee. I look forward to taking your questions.