

STATEMENT OF JANE TOSHIKO NISHIDA
NOMINEE FOR ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR INTERNATIONAL AND TRIBAL AFFAIRS
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
BEFORE THE
SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS COMMITTEE
JUNE 16, 2021

Thank you, Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and Members of the Committee.

I am humbled to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to be the Assistant Administrator for International and Tribal Affairs for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

For over thirty years, I have worked in the environmental field, working with federal and state governments, tribal nations, and with international and nongovernmental organizations. And it has been my privilege to spend the last ten years at EPA, working alongside the incredible staff who dedicate their careers to furthering the Agency's mission to protect public health and the environment.

I want to first acknowledge my family who are joining remotely from Portland and Seattle and my niece, Megan, who is here in person to support me. I know my parents are also with me in spirit, especially my father who served in the U.S. government for more than thirty years and who instilled in me the importance of public service.

I also want to thank Senator Cardin for introducing me today since my first start in public service was working at the Maryland General Assembly when Senator Cardin was the Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates. I will not embarrass him by mentioning how long ago that was, but suffice to say it was long before we both had grey hairs.

I worked for the State of Maryland for over sixteen years, including seven years as the Maryland Secretary of Environment. One of my greatest accomplishments in Maryland was working with Senator Cardin to enact the landmark critical areas law to protect the Chesapeake Bay. I worked closely with the diverse stewards of our environment – farmers, fisherman, local

governments, NGO's and citizens - and saw first-hand the integral interconnections between agriculture and resource protection, economy development and the environment.

In 2011, I joined EPA as the Director of the Regional and Bilateral Affairs within the Office of International and Tribal Affairs, and then in 2013, was promoted to the Office's Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator. Taking on this second role enabled me to work with 574 federally recognized tribes in the United States and to visit Indian Country. It was an inspiring experience to see first-hand the amazing resilience of the Santa Clara Pueblo to the devastating wildfire in 2011, the Quapaw Tribe's impressive clean-up of the Tar Creek superfund site, or the Swinomish Tribe's significant water quality management program. It inspired me to strengthen EPA's consultation policy with tribes by being the first federal agency to incorporate the consideration of treaty rights and resources.

Globally, foreign nations are facing similar challenges as our tribal nations – challenges of extreme weather events, climate change, water quality, environmental clean ups, and environmental justice. The United States and EPA has a long history of providing environmental leadership in our bilateral relationships with countries and in multilateral forums. By sharing our regional and local best practices, and our scientific expertise and private sector innovations, much of the world has come to view EPA as the gold standard of environmental protection. For example, my office has led regional cooperation in Asia to improve air quality and has provided technical assistance in Central America to improve environmental governance. More recently, my office has been focusing on the global challenge of marine litter, sharing EPA's domestic and international initiatives on this important issue.

Should I be confirmed, I look forward to advancing EPA's leadership and mission with our tribal partners in Indian Country and our international partners around the world.

Thank you, again, Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to meet with you today. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.