

Statement of Mary B. Neumayr
Nominated to be a Member of the Council on Environmental Quality
Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
July 19, 2018

Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as the nominee for the position of Member, and if confirmed, Chairman of the Council on Environmental Quality. I am honored that the President has nominated me for this position.

By way of background, I am a native of California, was born in the San Francisco Bay Area and grew up in the suburbs of Los Angeles. I am the oldest of seven children, and growing up spent most of my free time outdoors, including playing tennis, swimming and other activities. What I looked forward to the most, however, were family road trips during the summers. On these trips we visited nearly every state and saw many of our nation's most spectacular national parks, rivers, mountain ranges, and coastlines. These trips gave me a deep appreciation of the great beauty and diversity of our country.

I am extremely grateful to be considered for this position. Over the past 15 years, I have had the privilege of working in a variety of roles in the executive and legislative branches on matters involving energy and environmental law and policy. In those roles, I have had the opportunity to collaborate and work closely with dedicated career officials from numerous Federal agencies and departments, as well as with Members and Congressional staff on both sides of the aisle.

Since March of 2017, I have served as the Chief of Staff of CEQ. In this role, I have had the pleasure of working with the agency's approximately 30 lawyers, professional staff and detailees. In my current position, I supervise CEQ's operations and activities, including its core responsibility of overseeing the implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act by Federal agencies. I also supervise the Office of Federal Sustainability which supports energy and environmental performance across the Federal government.

The National Environmental Policy Act which established CEQ in 1970 was the first major environmental law in the United States, and is often called the "Magna Carta" of Federal

environmental laws. The Act states that it is the policy of the Federal Government to create and maintain the conditions under which man and nature can exist in “productive harmony” for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans. If confirmed, I commit to working every day to advance this policy for communities across the country and to promote effective environmental protection.

Under the leadership of President Trump, we have a unique opportunity to improve the government-wide implementation of NEPA, and to make government processes and decision-making under this and related statutes more timely, efficient and effective for the American people. I believe that timely and efficient processes for environmental reviews and related permitting decisions under NEPA are critical to growing our economy, creating jobs and achieving environmental protection. This includes projects to modernize our nation’s infrastructure as well as environmental restoration and other environmentally beneficial projects. If confirmed, my highest priority will be to advance the practical, efficient and effective implementation of NEPA, as well as our nation’s other environmental laws, and to promote environmental protection consistent with Congressional directives.

To this end, last August President Trump issued Executive Order 13807 which directs Federal agencies to conduct more timely, coordinated and efficient environmental reviews and permitting processes for major infrastructure projects. Under this order, CEQ has worked with the Office of Management and Budget and federal agencies to put in place a framework to implement a “One Federal Decision” policy. In addition, CEQ is currently undertaking other actions, including review of its NEPA regulations and guidance, in order to enhance and modernize the Federal environmental review and authorization process under NEPA and related statutes.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Carper, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you. I would be happy to answer any questions, and I look forward to working with this Committee, as well as your colleagues in both the Senate and the House, should I have the honor of being confirmed.