

**Opening Statement of Kathleen Hartnett White**  
**Nominee for Member, White House Council on Environmental Quality**  
**U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works**  
**November 8, 2017**

Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper, and Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for member, and if confirmed, chairman of the White House Council on Environmental Quality. I am grateful to the President for the confidence he has placed in me.

As I mentioned earlier, my husband Beau is a fifth generation cattle rancher. His family ranch in Presidio County of far west Texas, among the most remote areas of the country, is a living example of the mission of the National Environmental Policy Act to promote an enduring and productive harmony between humans and nature.

Growing up in rural Kansas, my late parents instilled in me a lifelong curiosity and reverence for the natural world. They also taught me to wisely use the natural resources with which our country is so blessed.

A strong economy, I believe, is what makes environmental gains possible. As chairman of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, my record of achieving major improvements in air quality demonstrates that economic growth indeed can go hand in hand with remarkable environmental improvements. And, I am proud to say, Texas has been a leader in showing that.

The Texas environment is dramatically cleaner now than it was 30 or 40 years ago, while the state's economy has continued to grow. While I was chairman of TCEQ, Texas experienced nation-leading growth in population (3.05 million [14.6%]), Gross State Product (\$438 billion [59.1%]), and jobs (872,352 [7.6%]), while dramatically reducing point source emissions (e.g., Nitrogen Oxides [51.3%], Volatile Organic Compounds [28.6%], and Sulfur Dioxide [27.1%]), as well as ambient pollution levels (e.g., Ozone [30%]). Win-win outcomes are indeed possible.

In particular, as chairman of TCEQ, I had regulatory oversight over more than 315,000 public and private entities – implementing and enforcing binding regulations on air quality, water quality, water supply, waste disposal, and recycling. With the help of a dedicated staff of over 3,000, and working with officials across the state and federal agencies,

TCEQ had many successes. As an example, for years, Houston had vied with Los Angeles as the worst ozone polluter in the United States. But under the state implementation plan developed when I was chair, Houston actually attained those federal ozone standards in 2010 and 2011, far earlier than many thought possible.

The achievements of Texas in recent years, I think were possible because we insisted upon robust science, coordination across agencies, efficient permitting and timely, predictable outcomes. These principles are also the keys to the President's agenda for regulatory reform and urgently needed new infrastructure. I strongly believe that the Federal government can and should provide a predictable, transparent, and timely process for making decisions, including for major infrastructure projects. We owe this to the American people.

I am an environmental optimist. I believe in and played a part in win-win environmental and economic outcomes. I have witnessed first-hand in Texas dramatic environmental improvements in air and water quality while the economy grew and jobs increased. Similar opportunities are now possible across the country. The biggest challenge to expanding win-win outcomes is the weight of unnecessarily burdensome costs and unpredictable regulatory processes.

This Committee has a proud history of working together to solve complex national problems with practical solutions that benefit all Americans. If confirmed, I pledge to work with this Committee to continue that tradition and achieve a balanced and effective national approach to our environmental challenges.

Thank you. I look forward to responding to any questions the Committee may have.