

Statement of Christopher T. Hanson
Committee on Environment and Public Works
March 11, 2020

Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I'm honored to have been nominated by the President to serve our country on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Thank you, Senator Feinstein for your kind words of introduction. And a thank you to Senator Alexander for his letter of support.

I'd like to thank Anne, my wife and partner of 25 years for her steadfast love and support. Also here are our sons, Sam, Andrew, and Theo. Your mom and I are enormously proud of you. Finally, a thank you to my parents, Tom and Linda, who are watching over the internet back in Michigan. Hi, mom.

I grew up in Southwest Michigan just a few miles from the Palisades Nuclear Generating Station. As the test of the plant's emergency alert system blared from telephone poles each month, I understood early on the value of a reliable, independent regulator to ensure that the communities surrounding the nation's nuclear plants are safe.

My professional career has spanned both the public and private sectors – from radioactive waste cleanup efforts to new nuclear construction to nuclear research and development. And finally to the Appropriations Committee here in the United States Senate.

Early in my career, I served as a consultant to the National Governors Association's Federal Facilities Task Force, a forum for state governments to collectively interact with the Department of Energy on cleanup of the Cold War nuclear weapons complex. That experience instilled in me a deep sympathy for state and local governments' desire to have input and influence on federal decisions affecting their jurisdictions.

Later, I was a consultant to the Department of Energy on the economics and governance of uranium enrichment decontamination and efforts to close the fuel cycle through reprocessing and advanced reactor technologies. I also helped a major east coast utility conduct a project risk assessment of new nuclear construction. I gained an appreciation for how private sector entities decide to make investments in nuclear power and technology, and how government programs can influence those decisions.

As a career civil servant at the Department of Energy, I managed the Department's relationship with Congressional Appropriations Committees – learning the value of congressional engagement and oversight in holding agencies accountable for spending and policy decisions.

For the past six years, I've served as professional staff on the Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee overseeing the NRC's budget and operations, nuclear energy research and development programs, as well as nuclear national security efforts. One of the most rewarding aspects has been the collegiality and close bipartisan working relationships among staff on the Committee.

If confirmed, I intend to bring these varied experiences to my tenure at the NRC – a passion for public participation and transparency, respect for private sector decision-making, appreciation of Congressional oversight, and a commitment to collegiality.

The NRC faces a complex set of challenges in the coming years – overseeing increased plant closures, regulating a current fleet ever more important to clean energy goals, and preparing to license a diverse array of new reactor technologies. With a deep commitment to public service and a safe nuclear industry, I feel I would be coming full circle with a role at the NRC.

In closing, I am humbled by the prospect of joining the other members of the Commission, including Commissioner David Wright, here today, each of whom brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and insight to regulating the civilian use of nuclear materials and power.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I look forward to your questions.