STATEMENT OF SEN. KERRY – NOMINATION OF GINA MCCARTHY

Everyone who knows Gina McCarthy understands that long before it was fashionable, she lived out a special determination to make every day Earth Day.

For more than a quarter of a century, she's been absolutely tireless working to save our planet, holding influential positions, most of them in Massachusetts.

She's an excellent choice to be Assistant Administrator for Air and Radiation at the Environmental Protection Agency.

President Obama has promised to make climate change one of his top initiatives. His choice of Gina is an important step in making good on that promise. It's crucial that he do so and that we act quickly – because time is running out.

Ignoring climate change will have devastating effects – more famine, more drought, more widespread pandemics, more natural disasters, more resource scarcity, and human displacement on a massive scale. That's why we're already at work on it in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

Gina is a familiar face for those of us from Massachusetts. She held a number of high level positions in our state, all of which she used to improve our environment. That was after she had the good sense to get a good education in our state – at the University of Massachusetts and Tufts University.

But she eventually went on to serve Connecticut to be Commissioner of the state Department of Environmental Protection. She used that position to produce an innovative Climate Change Action plan and to push the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to cap greenhouse gas emissions and create a region carbon market.

Gina also promoted conservation and the expansion of the state park system through a great program called "No Child Left Inside." It's no secret that today's kids spend a great deal of time indoors. But it was Gina brought them outdoors so they could experience nature firsthand instead of on TV or on a computer screen.

Gina has served under two Republican governors – Mitt Romney in Massachusetts and Jodi Rell in Connecticut. So her selection also demonstrates how serious the President is about bipartisanship.

Gina has demonstrated a level of achievement worthy of this important position. Economist Gary Yohe thinks so. Yohe, who shared the 2007 Nobel Prize with Al Gore, said Gina will bring "energy and excitement" to the Obama administration.

I couldn't agree more. And as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, I can't wait to work with her and the EPA to keep the energy and excitement flowing to ensure the long-term health of our global environment. We've got no time to waste -- and we need Gina at the helm.