Oral Testimony of Usha-Maria Turner

Before The United States Senate

Committee on Environment and Public Works

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Good morning, Chairman Capito, Ranking Member Whitehouse and members of this committee, I am honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee to be the Assistant Administrator for International and Tribal Affairs (OITA) at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

I want to express my deep gratitude to President Trump and to Administrator Zeldin for the confidence and trust that they have put in me through this nomination – it is truly humbling and if confirmed, I promise to faithfully execute my duties at EPA, consistent with the Administration's policies and EPA's statutory authority.

I am joined today by some very important and proud people in my life sitting behind me: my husband Neil, my son Alex and my brother Akhil and his daughter, Nara. My college senior has just started her summer internship but is watching online as are my parents from the country of Trinidad.

I have spent 25 rewarding years working for companies within the electric utility, natural gas and coal production sectors, foundationally in environmental public policy and compliance programs across multiple federal and state agencies. This experience engrained in me, a deep understanding of regulatory frameworks and that economic development and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive.

My early career years included conducting environmental compliance audits where I gained an appreciation for the law and the importance of compliance and governance programs. I spent the rest of my career in increasingly expanding public policy roles that brought me into working with the legislative branch and the statutes and rulemaking process behind the frameworks that I was once auditing. As my roles increased, my regulatory experience

touched the large-scale retirement of baseload power generation, the resulting economic impacts on local communities, the influence of revolutionizing technology on energy markets and the now, inextricable connection between energy and economic security, environmental regulation and quality of life.

Throughout my career, I have worked in collaboration with EPA, states, industry, non profits and others on a number of issues from assessing cross-border air quality impacts from our southern neighbor, to regulating global pollutants like mercury and numerous rulemaking efforts across several program offices.

EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs (OITA) leads EPA's international and tribal engagements, working across a multitude of areas and stakeholders within EPA's core mission of protecting human health and the environment.

On the international side is the ever-growing reality that pollution does not respect international boundaries and, environmental issues are a part of global trade dynamics. OITA is EPA's lead office with other federal agencies and international organizations, engaging in environmental negotiations consistent with EPA's core mission and furthering U.S. policy and trade interests abroad.

OITA is also EPA's lead office on tribal issues. Honoring a government-to-government relationship, OITA guides the agency-wide effort to strengthen public health and environmental protection among the 574 federally recognized tribes and Alaskan Native Villages in Indian Country with a focus on enabling Tribal nations to administer their own environmental programs and, carrying out its federal trust responsibility.

As an engineer by training, I am wired as a problem solver and drive for results. By my experience, I have worked through balancing economic prosperity and environmental protection, respecting the legal frameworks governing industry and its regulators.

Should I be confirmed, I look forward to bringing this experience to implementing the Administration's America's First Policy within EPA's core mission, domestically and abroad.

Madam Chairman, I thank you for the invitation to be here today and I look forward to the dialogue.