STATEMENT OF ROBERT LANCE BOLDREY, NOMINATED TO BE A MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE MORRIS K. UDALL SCHOLARSHIP AND EXCELLENCE IN NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY FOUNDATION

TO THE UNITED STATES SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

JULY 17, 2007

Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide this statement in support of my nomination for a second term as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Morris K. Udall Foundation. I am honored to have been nominated to this position and, if confirmed, look forward to continuing my public service by helping to advance the mission of the Udall Foundation.

My professional career and personal background have provided me with valuable experience and perspective that I have brought to the Udall Foundation. I grew up in northern rural Michigan close to the shores of Lake Michigan. Following my undergraduate education at James Madison College of Michigan State University, I earned a law degree from the Duke University School of Law. I then returned to Michigan, where I practiced in the Government and Commerce department of a mid-size Capitol city law firm, before joining the Republican policy staff of the Michigan House of Representatives.

In 1999, I was given the opportunity to join Governor Engler's administration as his Deputy Legal Counsel. During my tenure in the Governor's office, I was responsible for managing all aspects of the State of Michigan's relationship with twelve federally recognized Indian tribes. Like most states, Michigan did have its disputes with the sovereign tribal governments located within its borders. I am proud, however, of the role I played in minimizing these disputes, in emphasizing cooperation over conflict, and in laying the groundwork for a more beneficial relationship in the future.

While serving in the Governor's office, I wrote the first ever Governor's Policy Statement on State-Tribal Affairs and created the position of Governor's Advisor on State-Tribal Affairs, in which I served until the end of Governor Engler's term. I negotiated a State-Tribal Accord that emphasizes consultation and cooperation between the state and tribal governments and that is serving to guide the relationship between these governments into the future. That Accord was signed by Governor Engler and the state's tribal leaders in 2002. Also in 2002, I organized the second of two annual state-tribal summits between the Governor's Cabinet and all of Michigan's tribes. These were the first such summits to take place in Michigan, a tradition that has continued with the next administration and that hopefully will continue for many more.

In addition to advocating for a closer and more cooperative relationship between the state and tribes, and helping to set in place the framework for the further development of that relationship, I led the state executive office in negotiating two landmark agreements that evidence the benefits of such a relationship. In 1999 and 2000, I helped lead negotiations between the state and five tribes for a conservation-based consent decree governing state and tribal fishing in the Great Lakes. This decree brought settlement to nearly thirty years of divisive litigation and even more importantly put in place conditions that allow for the rehabilitation of native lake trout.

During my time in the Governor's office, I also helped lead negotiations for comprehensive state-tribal tax agreements that were signed in 2002. While a number of states and tribes have reached agreements concerning tobacco and motor fuels taxes, Michigan and its tribes were the first to reach agreement as to the administration and applicability of all state and tribal taxes to transactions involving tribes and tribal members. These agreements not only put to rest complex and often divisive tax issues, but also provide economic certainty that is of great benefit to tribes seeking to lure economic development and diversify tribal economies.

After Governor Engler's term ended, I returned to the private sector, where I now head the Indian law practice at the law firm of Dykema Gossett, PLLC. In this role, I work with numerous Indian tribes across the nation and with many businesses that in turn work or partner with tribes. Not only does this field of practice give me perspective on a wide variety of tribal issues, but it also requires me to bridge gaps between people and interests of vastly different cultures and backgrounds. I believe that this experience gives me insights that are helpful in guiding the Foundation's work in tribal policy and leadership matters.

Although the work of the Udall Foundation, in part, also provides leadership training and consultation to tribal leaders, my professional career has not given rise to any matters that might place me in a conflict of interest if I am confirmed to continue to serve on the Board of Trustees for the Udall Foundation.

I believe that my professional focus on promoting cooperation and negotiation as the best means to resolve conflicts is an outlook that has fit well with the mission of the Udall Foundation, as well as with the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution managed by the Udall Foundation. My background has allowed me to bring to the Udall Foundation personal experience to emphasize the gains that can be achieved within Indian Country by cooperation and negotiations between tribal and state governments, conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect for one another's sovereign status. I have also brought to the Udall Foundation the perspective of tribal and state governments from the Midwest, whose issues often differ from governments in Western states but are no less important to the Udall Foundation's activities.

I have been thrilled to be a part of the Udall Foundation's work during my past four years on the Board. The Foundation is blessed with dedicated, hard-working and creative staff, who are constantly seeking ways to advance the Foundation's missions. I believe that the present Board has helped provide the support necessary for the success of the Foundation, and I hope to assist the Board in continuing to do so.

In conclusion, I would greatly appreciate the support of the Committee on Environment and Public Works and the United States Senate as I seek to continue public service as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Udall Foundation. I will, of course, appear as a witness at the request of any duly constituted committee of the Congress and, as noted above, do not know of any matters that might place me in a conflict of interest if I am confirmed to this position. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this statement and for your kind consideration.

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