

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

STATEMENT BY
LUIS A. LUNA
NOMINEE FOR ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR ADMINISTRATION AND
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT
U.S. ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
UNITED STATES SENATE

April 6, 2005

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Bush's nominee for Assistant Administrator for Administration and Resources Management for the Environmental Protection Agency.

The position oversees most of the assets and systems the Agency needs to do its work: personnel, training, facilities, security, purchasing, and grants administration. It is, in brief, an office responsible for many of the daily operations that make EPA run.

I believe the task before me would be straightforward: to provide EPA's 18,000 employees the tools they need to be successful, and to ensure that the resources you entrust to the Agency are used in appropriate ways. The goal of both of these endeavors, of course, is to implement the laws passed by Congress in a way that produces meaningful and cost-effective environmental improvements for our nation.

I would bring with me 32 years of experience in the Federal government, not-for-profit organizations and the private sector. During my career, I have had the opportunity to work for Senators and Members of Congress on legislative matters. I have served in four Federal agencies handling planning, performance and administrative issues. I have also helped created and run nonprofit organizations, as well as worked in the business community. These jobs have given me administrative and policy-development skills I would apply to the EPA post. They have also

provided me an understanding of what it takes to develop and implement initiatives in organizations large and small, as well as an appreciation for the impact that Federal policies can have on the nation.

Should you and your colleagues grant me the high privilege of serving our country in this capacity, I will use three touchstones to guide me in my work: accountability, transparency, and results.

I will be accountable to the President, the Congress, the Administrator of EPA, my colleagues at the Agency, and most of all to the taxpayers. If I am asked to see that the Agency's resources are well managed, I must be willing to be held to account for my performance. This I will do. I will, in turn, also hold those with whom I work accountable, but always in a manner that is collaborative and constructive.

I will conduct my activities, and those of the office, with transparency. Administering EPA's resources is best done by ensuring that there is openness in the way decisions are made and issues are handled. From dealing with personnel matters to administering grants to purchasing supplies, it is vital to conduct our affairs in ways that are visible, understandable and credible. Only in that way can we hope to maintain the integrity of the outcome.

I will be focused on results. Activity is not the same as progress, and I will commit to pressing for solutions to issues. I will avoid policies and directives that ensnare our goals in bureaucratic procedures rather than forward motion, thereby wasting time and resources.

One area that will draw my particular attention is EPA's grants program. I know that this Committee has repeatedly questioned its operations. I am also aware of the conclusions drawn by the Government Accountability Office, the Office of Management and Budget and EPA's

own Office of Inspector General regarding the management of EPA grants. I think these are legitimate concerns. It is essential that the \$4 billion EPA distributes in grants per year achieve the desired environmental results and are spent according to the rules. From what I read, that has not always been the case.

I am familiar with EPA's five-year grants management plan. It outlines how to improve staff training, increase competition, make better use of technology, enhance oversight and focus on environmental results. All of these are appropriate and necessary steps. Although the Agency is in the midst of implementing the plan, I nevertheless intend to look at it with fresh eyes and adjust it as needed to ensure its success. I will test it against the principles I mentioned earlier – accountability, transparency and results – to see that it does, indeed, fully and effectively address the persistent challenges faced by EPA's grants program.

I hope this brief overview will give you insights into how I would manage the resources you provide to the Environmental Protection Agency. Thank you for considering my nomination and for allowing me the opportunity to appear before you.