

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

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U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

**BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
UNITED STATES SENATE
APRIL 5, 2006**

Mr. Chairman, Senator Jeffords, and Members of the Committee. I am honored to appear before you today, and am seeking your confirmation to serve as Assistant Administrator for the Office of Prevention, Pesticides and Toxic Substances (OPPTS). It has been my pleasure to serve as the EPA Region 7 Administrator for the past four and one half years, and it is truly an honor to have the support of President Bush and Administrator Johnson, to serve the American people in this new capacity.

The Environmental challenges we face today are complex. They demand a focused and unyielding commitment to fully understand the issues, to seek solutions, and to facilitate change. I believe that working together with Congress, the states, the regulated community, the public interest community, and the American people, we can accelerate our environmental progress, foster a strong and vibrant economy, and assure that our citizens enjoy a safe and healthy environment in which to live, work and play.

I am dedicated to that belief, and the knowledge and experience that have brought me here today will serve me and the environment well. I bring a strong and abiding respect for America's natural resources. I majored in Forestry Management at Iowa State University. In addition to a traditional forestry curriculum, I minored in Agronomy, recognizing the importance of soil science, nutrient management, and soil conservation. My MS in Forestry Economics and Marketing added additional tools to solve complex environmental and natural resource management problems. Before coming to EPA, I worked for twenty-five years in the fields of mine reclamation, soil conservation, and water quality protection. I understand well the complexities of natural resource management. I also bring a healthy appreciation for the work of OPPTS; an office that is at the forefront of protecting public health and the environment.

Growing up west of Chicago, my anticipation each summer was for several weekend camping trips, and one major family vacation visiting any number of our nation's National Parks. Hiking, camping and seeing the incredible beauty of this country sparked my career in natural resource management and environmental protection. My wife Von and I chose to pass those same experiences and love of our land to our children. With my son Jason, I have backpacked the Sierras, canoed the Boundary Waters, and hiked the Grand Canyon.

If I am confirmed in this position, I know that I will be stepping up to the plate on a number of strategically important environmental issues – issues that are important to many members of this Committee. These include pesticide registration, lead and endangered species just to name a few. I can say unequivocally that I will approach each of them with an open mind, a

commitment to fully understand and appreciate all sides of an issue, and most importantly, with the paramount objective of protecting public health and the environment.

I will use the best and most appropriate tools to get the job done. If a regulatory approach makes sense, then that is what I will choose. If I can get the job done quicker and more efficiently by advocating a stewardship or partnership approach, then I will proceed down that path. If a combination of tools makes the most sense, then I will move in that direction. I believe this job requires flexibility, creativity and common sense, and I believe I bring those skills to the job.

Finally, I want to close by acknowledging the importance that my family's love and support means to me. I am blessed that my parents continue to live healthy productive lives back home in Illinois, and the values and training they gave me years ago continue to be central to my being. My daughter Keri is a constant example to me of strength, character and determination as a nurse in a neurosurgeon's office and a part-time student finishing her BA degree. My son Jason is one of the finest, caring young men I know, and a great outdoor adventure partner. He and his wife Heidi are beginning their life together and constantly remind me why we work today to assure the safe, healthy future of our planet. Finally, the love, strength and partnership of my wife Von inspire and sustain me. With this support, I am confident that if confirmed Assistant Administrator, my service will reflect positively on my family, and the needs of all families who rely on OPPTS and EPA for a safe, healthy environment.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am happy to answer any questions you have.