

S. HRG. 116-33

**HEARING ON THE NOMINATION OF ROBERT
WALLACE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
FOR FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS AT THE
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION**

JUNE 4, 2019

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COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS

ONE HUNDRED SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION

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HEARING ON THE NOMINATION OF ROBERT WALLACE TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS AT THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

TUESDAY, JUNE 4, 2019

**U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND PUBLIC WORKS,
*Washington, DC.***

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m. in room 406, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. John Barrasso (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senators Barrasso, Carper, Cramer, Braun, Rounds, Sullivan, Ernst, Cardin, Whitehouse, Markey, Van Hollen.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN BARRASSO, U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF WYOMING

Senator BARRASSO. Good morning. I call this hearing to order.

Today we will consider the nomination of Rob Wallace to be Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior. Once confirmed, he will oversee the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. His confirmation will be especially important, as neither of these agencies have Senate-confirmed leadership at this time. He will play a central role in managing fish and wildlife for the American public. That includes combatting invasive species, recovering endangered species, protecting migratory birds, restoring fisheries, and conserving and enhancing wildlife habitat.

I have known Rob Wallace for over 35 years. Without question, Rob is the right person for this job. Throughout his long and distinguished career, Rob has struck the proper balance between wildlife conservation, habitat management, and the use of our public lands. Rob's experience and leadership in Wyoming and in our Nation's capital are ideally suited for this critically important position.

Throughout his 45-year career, Rob has served in a variety of jobs that directly relate to the two Federal agencies that he is being nominated to oversee. Rob began his career as a seasonal park ranger in Grand Teton National Park. Since then, Rob has served as Assistant Director of the National Park Service, as Chief of Staff for Wyoming Senator Malcolm Wallop, as Staff Director of the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, as Chief of Staff for Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer, and as manager of U.S. Government Relations for GE Energy.

Rob currently serves as President of the Upper Green River Conservancy, the Nation's first cooperative conservation bank. Rob co-founded the Upper Green River Conservancy to protect core sage grouse habitat in the ecologically and energy-rich upper Green River Watershed in Southwest Wyoming. He built an innovative partnership of ranchers, conservation groups, energy companies, investors and other stakeholders.

Rob is also a founding member of the board of the Grand Teton National Park Foundation, which promotes the park's cultural, historic and natural resources. He is a member of the board of the Jackson Hole Land Trust, which protects open spaces, wildlife habitat, and working lands across northwest Wyoming.

In addition, Rob serves as a member of the University of Wyoming's Energy Resources Council. The Council sets priorities for energy-related academics, research and outreach. He has also served on the boards of numerous organizations dedicated to conserving wildlife and enhancing our national parks.

With credentials like these, it is no surprise that stakeholders from across the political spectrum have enthusiastically endorsed Rob's nomination. Dan Ashe, the former Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service during the Obama administration, and now the President and now the President of the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, wrote, "I have a good context for what creates success in this important and challenging position: a passion for the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service." He goes on to say, "An appreciation and admiration for the people who do the work, a penchant for listening, and a dedication to inclusive problem-solving." He concludes by saying, "In my view, Rob displays all of these crucial characteristics."

Richie Jones, the State Director for the Nature Conservancy in Delaware, also endorsed Rob's nomination. He has also received the support of over 40 environmental, conservation, and recreational organizations, including the National Parks Conservation Association, the National Wildlife Refuge Association, the Public Lands Council, Ducks Unlimited, American Sportfishing Association, congressional Sportsmen Foundation, and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership.

Confirming Rob is important to the work of this committee. The Environment and Public Works Committee has jurisdiction over fish and wildlife policy, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Earlier this year, Congress enacted the Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver Act, also known as the WILD Act. We did so to combat invasive species, to prevent wildlife poaching and trafficking, to promote wildlife conservation and to protect endangered species.

So I look forward to working with Rob to implement the WILD Act. I am in the process of developing legislation to modernize the Endangered Species Act. I continue to engage with State fish and wildlife agencies, environmental groups, conservation organizations, ranchers, farmers, energy producers, and others from across the political spectrum. I hope to gain their support and ultimately the support of a bipartisan group of Senators for a bill that modernizes the Endangered Species Act so it works better for species and for people.

Rob demonstrated to the Upper Green River Conservancy that it is possible to build such a coalition, focused on solving the problems of the Endangered Species Act. So I look forward to working with him on modernizing this important law.

Rob Wallace is an outstanding choice for the position of Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. I look forward to moving his nomination expeditiously through the confirmation process.

I will now turn to Ranking Member Carper for his opening statement.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. THOMAS R. CARPER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF DELAWARE**

Senator CARPER. Thanks very much, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Wallace, welcome. I want to welcome you and your daughters this morning.

Also, I would like to welcome Senator Mike Enzi, one of our favorite colleagues. I listened to the Chairman's opening statement, it sounds like you have his support, and Mike Enzi's support, Dan Ashe's support, Richie Jones' support from Delaware, a whole host, like a Who's Who of organizations here that represent and look after the fish and wildlife, endangered species and habitat protection, conservation. This is one of those deals where you may just want to ask somebody to make a motion, and we just vote.

Senator BARRASSO. So moved.

[Laughter.]

Senator CARPER. We can all take an early lunch.

Seriously, we appreciate your willingness to do this. It is always great to have Mike Enzi in the room, and we appreciate your family being here, too. We appreciate your willingness to serve in this role as Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks. I think it has to be a great job. Of all the jobs you could have, this has to be one of the best.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service are two agencies that, as we know, play critical roles in managing and protecting our Nation's most treasured natural resources and public lands. I am sure you will agree, given your experience as a park ranger, as a youngster, and as someone who has lived a life that I think you can be proud of.

In Delaware, we are extremely proud of our two national wildlife refuges, and one of the Country's newest national parks, the First State National Historical Park. Our refuges are home to threatened and endangered species, and people from all over the world travel to Delaware to visit these refuges, as well as our national park.

Overseeing these agencies and beloved public lands is no small task, but one that you seem prepared for, and I believe are passionate about. I especially appreciate the statement in your testimony, and this is a quote from you, "Bipartisan solutions are always the lasting ones. Those are words of wisdom."

I could not agree more. And I hope that we will be able to count on you to bring that balanced approach to the Administration's Department of the Interior.

Unfortunately, having said that, unfortunately, the Department and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in particular have taken actions in the last couple of years that could jeopardize our Nation's wildlife without bipartisan support from Members of Congress.

Specifically, the Administration has proposed regulation that could dramatically alter implementation of the Endangered Species Act, one of our Nation's most popular and effective environmental laws. These regulations could undermine the science that is supposed to drive species protection decisions.

This Administration has also adopted an unprecedented legal opinion relative to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, a stance that former top Fish and Wildlife Service officials from both Republican and Democratic administrations have vehemently opposed. What is more, the Trump Administration has reassigned dozens of Department of Interior senior executive service employees without good reasons, which is reportedly creating a culture of fear within the Department. Surpassing the expertise of career public servants is an injustice to natural resources that the Department is tasked with managing.

All of these actions, along with a number of others, are deeply concerning. Mr. Wallace, I would just say, as this committee considers your nomination, I hope you will heed these concerns and clearly convey a willingness to moderate some of these trouble actions. I also hope that we can work together to find bipartisan opportunities that support both solid science and conservation.

I believe that tackling climate change is one such opportunity. And due to climate change, our treasured national parks and refuges in the west are increasingly beset by catastrophic fires. Worsening storms are damaging our coastal parks and refuges.

Recently, the National Parks Conservation Association found that out of 417 parks surveyed, 96 percent faced significant air quality problems. You will learn more about how you will work to address these challenges. I believe it is now more important than ever that we work together to make sure our parks and our refuges are more resilient to climate change so that Americans may have the opportunity to visit these places for generations to come.

Mr. Wallace, you also possess a great deal of expertise in habitat conservation and mitigation. You and I have discussed your work in both Wyoming and in Delaware on projects that mean a great deal to each of us and to this committee. Clearly, you understand the importance of mitigating negative impacts on our environment. I believe that understanding provides another great opportunity for you to lead within the Department of the Interior.

So we look forward to hearing how you will utilize this expertise as Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks if confirmed. Right now, we need qualified leaders who are committed to safeguarding our natural resources. I feel confident that you are up to that challenge.

Thank you again for joining us. Again, welcome to your family. We look forward to hearing your testimony and to the conversation that will follow your testimony. Thank you.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Senator Carper.

Seeing that Senator Enzi is here, I think if there is any Senator that is mentioned in this committee, who is not a member of this committee, the No. 1 person on that list would be Mike Enzi, as you talk about his 80-20 rule, a good way to get things done legislatively and in a bipartisan way and working for the way.

Senator CARPER. Absolutely. I was in an Aspen Institute seminar in Prague last week, and we focused on U.S. relations with China, U.S. relations with Russia. We talked about Mike Enzi and the 80–20 rule. So you are all over the charts and all over the map.

Senator BARRASSO. With that, let me welcome to the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works Senator Mike Enzi, Senior Senator for Wyoming, who will do the introduction. Senator Enzi, thanks so much for joining us today.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. MIKE ENZI,
U.S. SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF WYOMING**

Senator ENZI. Mr. Chairman. Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper, it is my privilege to introduce Rob Wallace, who is testifying in front of your committee today on his nomination to serve as Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of Interior.

I have known Rob for many years, probably most of his life. I don't think there could be a better choice to fill the position. I am going to repeat some of the things that Chairman Barrasso said. I am a retailer, and I know that when you run an ad the first time, hardly anybody gets it. If you run it again, a few more do. And I would be willing to run this several times if it would help on the nomination.

Rob was born and raised in Wyoming, where he quickly learned the important role that the Department of Interior plays in the upkeep of our State's natural beauty. In fact, Rob's first job after college was with the National Park Service. He served as a seasonal ranger in Grand Teton National Park. For 5 years, Rob helped with the preservation and maintenance of one of our Nation's finest parks.

His passion for our Nation's public lands sent him here to Washington, where he handled energy and environment issues for former Wyoming Senator Malcolm Wallop, and before leaving Capitol Hill, he served as staff director of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee. He returned to Sheridan and the incredible Big Horn Mountains, until Rob once again came back to Washington, where he served as Assistant Director for the National Park Service for congressional and Legislative Affairs.

During this time, he supervised the Reagan administration's legislative agenda for national parks, which included readjusting visitor entrance fees, providing resources to fight the 1988 forest fires, and adding several new units to the national park system. In 1989, Rob became Senator Wallop's Chief of Staff, before heading back to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee in 1991, to again serve as staff director.

I first met Rob in 1995, when he served as Chief of Staff to the Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer, and I was in the State legislature. These days, Rob is still involved in Wyoming and the management of our public lands. Rob serves as the president of the Upper Green River Conservancy. Now, that is a sage grouse habitat bank that partners with ranchers, energy companies and conservation groups that work together to protect critical sage grouse habitat.

Rob's career and character reflect a man willing to step up and serve his community and Country. His years of experience at Inte-

rior and in the halls of Congress have well suited him to this new chapter. I am pleased to introduce him to you today, and I hope you will give his nomination full and fair consideration.

[The prepared statement of Senator Enzi follows:]

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you for joining us, Senator Enzi. We will have another opportunity tomorrow to introduce Rob, because this is one of those positions that requires hearings in two committees, the Environment and Public Works Committee and the Energy Committee. So I look forward to seeing you again tomorrow morning in that committee as we introduce our friend, Rob.

You are welcome to stay as long as you like. I know you have a pressing schedule, but thanks for being with us and joining us today, Senator Enzi. Thank you.

Now, I would like to welcome to our committee the nominee, Rob Wallace, the nominee to be Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior. I want to remind you; your full written testimony will be made part of the record. I look forward to hearing your testimony. I see some of your family are here. I know many of your friends are here. So, please, begin at your convenience.

Mr. WALLACE. With the opening statement, Senator?

Senator BARRASSO. Please, and if you would like to introduce your family, as well.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT WALLACE, NOMINATED TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR FISH, WILDLIFE, AND PARKS, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. WALLACE. Absolutely. Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper and members of the committee, thank you for having me here today. I am grateful to the President for nominating me to this position, and thank Secretary Bernhardt for his support.

I would also like to recognize family members who are here from Wyoming today, my wife, Celia, who is not only a remarkable partner but epitomizes the spirit of bipartisanship, having worked for both a Democrat and Republican member of the Senate years ago.

My oldest daughter, Morgan, just finished her sophomore year in engineering at Wake Forest University, and is down from New York where she is doing a renewable energy internship this summer. And my youngest daughter, Ella, finished fourth grade and cannot be here today, because she is home studying for the SSAT in the event she has to apply for a new school next fall.

[Laughter.]

Mr. WALLACE. The four of us live a mile south of Grand Teton National Park and the Yellowstone ecosystem. Each year, our community hosts millions of visitors who come to play in two of the world's majestic national parks. They also marvel at the abundant wildlife we all enjoy, thanks to wise management by State and Federal officials, and the National Elk Refuge, located in the heart of our valley.

But I know that simply living in a special place isn't sufficient justification to ask for your support to oversee two of the world's most celebrated agencies, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. So I would like to explain a little bit about how I got here.

My journey began decades ago when I was hired right out of college as a seasonal park ranger in Grand Teton National Park. For the next 5 years, I patrolled the park's rivers and lakes, worked with the mountain rescue team, enforced the game and fish regulations, performed law enforcement operations and emergency medical services on the park's highways, and traveled on skis for days at a time across the Yellowstone and Grand Teton back country. And in the fall, if my park work ended early, I worked at an elk hunting camp at a nearby national forest.

But it wasn't the daily adventures that had the most profound effect on me. It was the political issues that swirled around every aspect of my job. Here was a place where dignitaries from around the world had traveled to attend the Second World Conference on National Parks, and where the President of the United States came to relax. Up the road, in Yellowstone, a raging debate was brewing over how to wean grizzly bears off human garbage. And in the Tetons, vibrant conversation was underway about fire management, search and rescue, visitors' use, and resource protection.

In an effort to find a way to get more involved in these issues and others, I quit my park job and volunteered on a campaign for Malcolm Wallop, who was running for the U.S. Senate from Wyoming. His race succeeded, and suddenly I had a front-row seat to some of the most consequential energy, wildlife and natural resource issues in a generation.

Starting my Senate career as an LA, following the EPW committee, and ending up as the minatory staff director of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I was here when Congress tackled the Alaska Lands legislation, a crippling oil embargo, the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, the restructuring of the U.S. electricity industry, controversial endangered species issues, such as the spotted owl and the snail darter, and much more.

I also broadened my understanding of new park authorizations, fee legislation, concession oversight and the importance of timely communications with Congress, while heading the Park Service's office of congressional Relations. Later, as chief of staff to the Governor of Wyoming, I was in the middle of wolf reintroduction in Yellowstone.

I ended my time in Washington working for GE, where my primary responsibility was leading a policy team that focused on the deployment of clean energy technologies in the United States and around the world. Over the years, I also became a champion of public-private partnerships, through serving on boards of several natural resources organizations, whose missions were to help fund infrastructure projects, augment wildlife research budgets, and provide opportunities for young people to work and learn on our public lands. Today, I work on the frontiers of the Endangered Species Act in southwestern Wyoming, bringing ranchers, regulators, conservationists, and industry leaders together to protect large-scale habitats of the greater sage grouse, while removing barriers to multiple use.

Along the way, I have learned so much, especially that no one ever wins by winning everything, that bipartisan solutions are al-

ways the lasting solutions, and that the key success to management is recruiting good people and trusting them to do their jobs.

Finally, if confirmed, I want to stress my commitment to work constructively with Congress on behalf of our parks, refuges, fish, and wildlife. If well-meaning people engage in good faith and communicate effectively, the benefit to these national treasures can be unlimited.

I thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Wallace follows:]

**Statement of George Robert Wallace
Nominee for the Position of Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks,
Department of the Interior**

**Before the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate**

June 4, 2019

Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Carper, and members of the EPW Committee, thank you for scheduling this hearing. I am grateful for the confidence of the President in nominating me for the position of Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, and appreciative of the strong support from Secretary Bernhardt.

I would also like to thank the members of my family who are here from Wyoming. My wife, Celia, is not only a remarkable partner but is also the epitome of bipartisanship, having worked for both a Democrat and Republican member of the Senate. My oldest daughter, Morgan, just completed her sophomore year in engineering at Wake Forest University. And my youngest daughter, Ella, just finished the eighth grade in Jackson, Wyoming.

The four of us live a mile south of Grand Teton National Park in the Yellowstone ecosystem. Each year our community hosts millions of visitors who come to play in two of world's most majestic national parks and the Bridger-Teton National Forest. They also marvel at the abundant wildlife we all enjoy -- thanks to wise management by state and federal officials -- and the National Elk Refuge, located in the heart of our valley.

It's a place where one of our most famous residents, Grizzly Bear 399, has her own Facebook page, where visitors can rent a car and get a can of bear spray at the same time, where our traffic is often slowed to a crawl by herds of bison and elk, and where a "neighborhood watch" means looking out for animals when our kids are walking to and from the school bus.

It's a community where lives are touched every day by the agencies and policies that you oversee on this committee.

So, when my friends back home good naturedly ask why I would leave such a special place for Washington, I tell them it's because this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to involve myself in issues I've cared about my entire adult life.

But I know that simply caring isn't sufficient justification to ask for your support to oversee two of the world's most celebrated agencies – the National Park Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. So, I would like to explain how I got here.

My journey began decades ago, when I was hired right out of college as a seasonal ranger in Grand Teton National Park.

For the next five years I patrolled the park's rivers and lakes, worked with the mountain rescue team, enforced game and fish regulations, performed law enforcement operations and emergency medical services on the park highways, and travelled on skis for days at a time across the Yellowstone and Teton backcountry. And in the fall, if my park season ended early, I worked in an elk hunting camp in the nearby national forest.

But it wasn't the daily adventures that had the most profound effect on me. It was the political issues that swirled around almost every aspect of my job.

Here was a place where dignitaries from around the world travelled to attend the Second World Conference on National Parks and where the president of the United States came to relax. Up the road in Yellowstone a raging debate was underway over how to wean grizzly bears off human garbage. In the Tetons, exciting conversations about fire management, search and rescue, visitor use, and resource protection were almost a daily occurrence.

I still remember spending a day at a smoldering lightning strike on the west shore of Jackson Lake while officials at Moose headquarters, the regional office in Denver, Park Service headquarters in Washington, the Secretary of Interior, and the White House deliberated on whether to let this fire burn according to a new policy or have me snuff it out.

And it was because of those experiences and dozens of others that I began asking myself how I could get more involved in these debates.

That desire led me to quit my park job and volunteer on a campaign for Malcolm Wallop, who was running for the US Senate from Wyoming. His race succeeded and suddenly I had a front row seat to some of the most consequential energy, wildlife, and natural resource issues in generations.

Starting my Senate career as a legislative assistant following the Environment and Public Works Committee and ending as the minority staff director of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, I was here when Congress tackled the Alaska Lands Act, a crippling oil embargo, the Three Mile Island nuclear accident, the Exxon Valdez oil spill, the restructuring of the US electricity industry, controversial endangered species listings such as the snail darter and northern spotted owl, and much more.

I also broadened my understanding of new park authorizations, fee legislation, concession oversight, and the importance of timely communications with Congress while heading the Park Service's office of congressional affairs. Later, as chief of staff to the governor of Wyoming, I was in middle of wolf reintroduction in Yellowstone.

I ended my time in Washington working for GE, where I led a policy team that advocated for the deployment of clean energy technologies in the United States and around the world.

Over the years, I've also become a champion of public-private partnerships through serving as a board member on several natural resource-oriented foundations whose missions are to help fund important infrastructure projects, augment wildlife research budgets, and provide opportunities for young people to work and learn on our public lands.

Today, I work on the frontiers of the Endangered Species Act in southwestern Wyoming, bringing ranchers, regulators, conservationists, and industry leaders together to protect large scale habitats for the greater sage grouse while also removing barriers to multiple use.

Along the way I've learned so much -- especially that no one ever really wins by winning everything, that bipartisan solutions are always the lasting ones, and the importance of recruiting good people and trusting them to do big jobs.

Finally, if confirmed, I want to stress my commitment to work constructively with Congress on behalf of our parks, refuges, fish and wildlife. If well-meaning people engage in good faith and communicate effectively, the benefit to these national treasures can be unlimited.

Thank you. I look forward to answering your questions.

Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
Hearing entitled, "*Hearing on the Nomination of Robert Wallace to be Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior*"
June 4, 2019
Questions for the Record for Mr. Wallace

Ranking Member Carper:

1. Do you agree with our nation's leading scientists, including those within the Department of Interior, that have concluded climate change is real, is caused by humans, and is impacting fish, wildlife and parks?

Response: As I stated at my confirmation hearing, I do believe that climate change is an issue in which human activity has a role.

2. Do you question the conclusions of the Fourth National Climate Assessment that state our nation's ecosystems and economy are at grave risk if we do not take climate actions today?

Response: As I indicated at my hearing, although I am aware of it, I have not read the assessment.

3. Do you commit to this Committee that, if confirmed, you will not directly or indirectly interfere with or undermine climate science?

Response: There is no question that scientific integrity, transparency, and independence should underpin agency actions. I have great respect for the work the Department scientists carry out. My view is that agency decisions should follow the law and be predicated on the best information, including the best available science.

4. As Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, what will you do to make our parks and refuges more resilient in the face of climate change?

Response: Within the purview of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, my focus would be on helping fish and wildlife and plants adapt to the impact of a changing climate and addressing those impacts through the application of the best science, planning, research and monitoring tools available First and foremost, guiding all of my decision-making, should I be confirmed, would be adherence to the law. Second, would be an evaluation of the best available science and consideration of the views of the resource management professionals on the ground. Finally, I am committed to building and maintaining partnerships to address the challenges facing our nation's parks and refuges. This includes working with state and local elected representatives, tribes, members of Congress and all stakeholders to inform agency actions.

5. Since 2017, the Trump Administration has reassigned dozens of Senior Executive Service employees. Some of these employees were outspoken on climate change, and the

reassignments were perceived as retaliatory. Rather than accept reassignment, several of these dedicated public servants chose to leave the Department. I wrote a letter with colleagues expressing concerns about these reassignments and the culture of fear they have reportedly created within the Department. I received a response, but that response only provided the legal justification for the reassignments. The Department provided no response on how these reassignments would better support the Department's missions. As Assistant Secretary, would you commit to work with Congress on oversight of these reassignments? Would you be willing to provide detailed information about the rationale behind any future SES reassignments, upon request? Would you commit to protect career staff at the Department of the Interior and bolster their expertise instead of suppressing it?

Response: I believe in the integrity of the SES program and believe it has produced a great number of high caliber career professionals in both the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service. With regard to reassignments under this Administration, having not been at the Department, I am not familiar with the circumstances surrounding them.

6. People travel from around the world to view birds and other wildlife at Delaware's two national wildlife refuges – Bombay Hook and Prime Hook. These special refuges employ less than a dozen people, and the staff works hard to maintain the refuges and make sure they remain accessible to the public. Among other important positions, our refuges have a visitor services coordinator and a law enforcement official. As the Trump Administration continues Department of the Interior reorganization efforts, would you commit to me that refuge complexes like Delaware's will not lose critical staff as a result? How will you work with refuge managers and project leaders to make sure their staffing needs are met?

Response: The approximately 30,000 employees of the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service are instrumental to the execution of the agencies' respective missions. As a principal overseeing these agencies within the Department, I would look to ensuring that we have the right people in the right places and trust them to get the work done while achieving maximum efficiencies with taxpayer dollars. Should I be confirmed, I would look forward to visiting the refuges in Delaware to better understand your concerns with the staffing needs there.

7. As President and CEO of the Upper Green River Conservancy, you led an effort with a broad group of stakeholders to preserve sage-grouse habitat in Wyoming. What lessons from that collaborative effort will you bring to the Assistant Secretary position? Do you see this as an example of how decision makers at all levels can work together to ensure a species does not require Endangered Species Act protections?

Response: I believe in the value of partnerships in achieving lasting, durable solutions to conservation challenges, including those related to endangered species. In southwestern Wyoming, I have worked to bring stakeholders together to protect habitat while also removing barriers to multiple use.

8. As you know, strong mitigation requirements are an essential tool as we seek to prevent species from requiring protections under the Endangered Species Act, as seen with recent efforts to conserve sage-grouse. However, this Administration has been hostile towards the idea of compensatory mitigation. What do you see as the value of mitigation in terms of wildlife habitat conservation, and do you support Congress clarifying the Department of the Interior's authority to require mitigation?

Response: In my experience, when done right, these efforts can result in lasting benefits for species and habitat and regulatory certainty for private landowners and industry.

9. The Department of the Interior does not always give the Fish and Wildlife Service a seat at the table in discussions about whether and how the Department should manage federal land, even when management decisions impact habitat for imperiled species. Examples of where this presents a problem include the development of an oil and gas leasing program in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and implementation of sage-grouse conservation plans. Do you agree that the Service should be at the table? What steps will you take to ensure that the Service is included in important Department of Interior conversations about leasing and energy development in ecologically sensitive areas that are home to imperiled species?

Response: Collaborative conservation is an important tool that can be used in the management of imperiled species. Better results are often achieved by using the resources and expertise of all stakeholders to plan and implement successful conservation programs. This can and must be achieved alongside responsible resource development.

10. Are you aware of the Fish and Wildlife Service initiative called "Conservation without Conflict?" This initiative is intended to prevent new species from requiring protections under the Endangered Species Act, while keeping working lands working. Landowners and conservation organizations, as well as members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, have hailed this initiative as a great success. As Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, will you support and help grow this initiative?

Response: Because I have not served in the Department in this Administration, I am not familiar with this particular initiative. However, I can assure you the principles of preventing new listings under the ESA and keeping working lands working are two that I support. I would look forward to learning more about this initiative, should I be confirmed.

11. By law, federal land managers are responsible for protecting the air quality for the lands they administer. However, just as air pollution drifts into downwind states like Delaware from upwind sources, it also drifts into our nation's national parks and wildlife refuges. This pollution, which is outside a federal land manager's control, damages the health of visitors and wildlife alike and counters the efforts to protect these places. Congress tried to address this problem through the Clean Air Act, directing EPA to take actions to

ensure our national parks have the best air quality in the nation. EPA delivers on this mandate through the Regional Haze Rule. Federal land managers, including the National Park Service, have been a critical partner in the successful implementation of the Regional Haze Rule. As a result of these federal protections, the air quality in our national parks is much cleaner and healthier than just a decade ago. Recently, I have heard some troubling news that the Administration may attempt to weaken the Regional Haze Program and may focus on the role of federal land managers. It was not that long ago when some of our national parks, like the Great Smoky Mountains, had higher air pollution days than cities like Atlanta and Houston. I worry that any rollbacks to the Regional Haze Rule will take us back to those dangerous days. Will you commit to this Committee that, if confirmed, you will reject any efforts by this Administration that weaken clean air protections for our national parks?

Response: Although I am not familiar with this particular issue, I commit to following the law and ensuring that my decisions, should I be confirmed, in advancing this Administration's priorities will be supported by the best available science.

12. In September 2018 a new national study evaluating all 417 national parks in the system found that temperatures in our national parks are increasing twice as fast as compared to the national average. Are you familiar with this study? As Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, how will you direct the Department to assess and address the impacts of these temperature increases?

Response: I am not specifically aware of the study that you reference. However, as I noted above, if confirmed, one of my jobs as Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks would be on helping fish and wildlife and plants adapt to the impact of a changing climate and moderating those impacts through the application of the best science, planning, research and monitoring tools available to managing species and habitat.

13. There is huge bipartisan opposition to expanded offshore drilling off of the Pacific and Atlantic coasts. Coastal national parks, including Acadia, Everglades, and Olympic, and coastal refuges, such as Prime Hook and Bombay Hook in Delaware, are home to threatened and endangered species that the Fish and Wildlife Service is charged with protecting. Given the potential impact on the two agencies you would oversee, how will you ensure the risks to parks, refuges and wildlife are adequately considered when the Administration returns to pushing for expanded offshore drilling?

Response: While oversight of resource development on the outercontinental shelf would not fall under my purview as Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, if confirmed I would share and work to advance the Secretary's commitment to responsible stewardship of the environment in the execution of bureau missions.

14. Last month, Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt announced \$2.1 million in grants to state and local partners in the West for habitat conservation activities in migration

corridors and winter range for big game. This was in support of a Secretarial Order originally signed by Secretary Zinke and reaffirmed by Secretary Bernhardt. Wildlife corridors are vital to the continued protection of species. We need to be doing more of this kind of work, and expand it beyond big game. I appreciate the Administration taking this step forward. However, I am concerned that the Administration is undermining this good work by offering oil and gas leases in the very same wildlife corridors they are supposedly trying to protect. How will you advise the Secretary on balancing these competing priorities?

Response: I acknowledge the importance of balancing a wide variety of interests and agency missions inherent among DOI bureaus, consistent with the law.

15. Will you commit to work with this Committee to ensure that rules governing the Duck Stamp program are designed to encourage the broadest possible participation in the program, and that any changes to such program are designed to lead to increased sales of the Duck Stamp?

Response: I know the Duck Stamp program has been a successful tool for conservation of migratory bird habitat and for providing the American public with increased recreational opportunities. If confirmed, I look forward to studying the program and its implementation and to working with you to better understand your concerns.

16. As you may know, American Indians and Alaska Natives share a unique relationship with the federal government. As part of that relationship, the federal government has a duty to perform meaningful consultation with Indian Tribes and Alaska Native villages regarding issues that affect tribal communities and tribal members. Do you commit to engage in essential and honest consultation with tribes and tribal governments?

Response: Yes, if confirmed, I will work closely with the Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs to maintain strong and productive government to government relationships with tribes and tribal governments.

17. For decades, both Republican and Democratic administrations alike have had written policies limiting White House contacts with agencies that have investigatory and enforcement responsibilities. These policies have recognized that even a simple phone call from the White House to an agency inquiring about or flagging a specific matter can upset the evenhanded application of the law.

- a. Do you agree that it is essential that in making decisions, the Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service must be shielded from political influence and spared even the appearance of being subject to political influence or considerations?
- b. Will you commit to notifying this Committee within one week if any inappropriate communications from White House staff to Fish and Wildlife Service or National Park Service staff, including you, occur?

Response: Throughout the course of my career, I have taken the matter of ethics very seriously and will continue to do so. For me, ethics is a matter of personal character. If confirmed, you have my full commitment that I will make every effort to ensure my actions and decisions as a leader within the Department are in compliance with my professional ethical obligations and promote a culture of compliance with the highest ethical standards.

18. Whistleblower laws protect the right of federal employees to make lawful disclosures to agency management officials, the Inspector General, and the Office of Special Counsel. They also have the right to make disclosures to Congress.

Specifically, 5 U.S.C. § 7211 states that the “right of employees, individually or collectively, to petition Congress or a Member of Congress or to furnish information to either House of Congress, or to a committee or Member thereof, may not be interfered with or denied.” Further, 5 U.S.C. § 2302(b)(8), makes it a violation of federal law to retaliate against whistleblower because of “(A) any disclosure of information by an employee or applicant which the employee or applicant reasonably believes evidences—(i) a violation of any law, rule, or regulation, or (ii) gross mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, any disclosure to the Special Counsel, or to the Inspector General of an agency or another employee designated by the head of the agency to receive such disclosures, of information which the employee or applicant reasonably believes evidences a violation of any law, rule, or regulation...” In addition, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 1505, it is against federal law to interfere with a Congressional inquiry.

- a. If you are confirmed, will you commit to protect the rights of all Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service career employees to make lawful disclosures, including their right to speak with Congress?

Response: If confirmed, I commit to protecting the rights of the employees that I will be managing and to following the law.

- b. Will you commit to communicate employees’ whistleblower rights via email to all Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service employees within a week of being sworn in?

Response: I understand that this is an important issue to you and agree that employees should have access to full information regarding their legal rights and responsibilities. If confirmed, I commit to looking into this issue, including current trainings provided to employees.

19. Do you agree to provide complete, accurate and timely responses to requests for information submitted to you by any Member of the Environment and Public Works Committee? If not, why not?

Response: Yes, I am committed to cooperating with congressional requests, consistent with the Department's constitutional and statutory responsibilities.

20. Will you commit to providing me with materials responsive to my oversight letters at the same time or earlier than they are provided to House Committee Chairs or Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requestors? If not, please explain why not.

Response: I am not in the Department, so am uncertain as to the inter-relationship between the processes to respond to FOIA requests and to Congressional requests. However, if confirmed, I commit to working with you to respond to your requests for information, consistent with the Department's constitutional and statutory responsibilities.

Senator Booker:

21. Last summer, the Fish and Wildlife Service released regulations that would change the way the agency implements the Endangered Species Act. I have serious concerns about the combined impact these will have on the agency's ability to protect and recover species, whether through the elimination of automatic protections for threatened species, the lack of consideration of climate change or the potential decrease in interagency consultations.

- a. Do any of the proposed revisions raise concerns for you?
- b. If confirmed, can you commit to review the proposed revisions before they are finalized?

Response: As I am not at the Department, I am not familiar with the specifics of the proposed revisions to the agency regulations. Generally, I believe that the Endangered Species Act has protected and recovered a number of species, including the bald eagle, the peregrine falcon, the black footed ferret, the whooping crane, and the grizzly bear. For the law to continue to work, people have to have confidence in the process of listing, including transparency and science, and the process of recovery, including management by states or the tribes as envisioned.

22. In 2015, the National Park Service implemented a rule that would ban egregious hunting practices in national preserves in Alaska. The ban did not apply to all hunting, but rather to objectionable activities such as baiting bears with greased donuts and shooting cubs in their dens. However, it appears this Administration thinks those practices are acceptable on our public lands and we could see a final rule that strips the protections against these abhorrent hunting practices any day.

- a. Do you believe killing bear cubs in their dens is acceptable in our national parks?
- b. If confirmed, can you commit to reconsidering this rule before it is finalized?

Response: Although I am not familiar with this particular issue, I understand that Alaska is different and there are unique resource management challenges in Alaska. I commit to following the law, working closely with state and local representatives and tribes, and to ensuring that the best available science supports the agency's actions.

23. The Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service have been working for years on a proposal to restore the grizzly bear population in the North Cascades. The restoration plan received significant support from the public in the comment period, and Secretary Zinke supported the plan moving forward. Yet we are still waiting on the next phase of the planning process.

- a. Do you support the plan to restore grizzlies to the North Cascades?
- b. If confirmed, can you commit to ensuring that the planning process moves forward expeditiously?

Response: I am not familiar with the details about any planning efforts to restore the grizzly bear in the North Cascades and would need to learn more about the issue, if confirmed.

Senator Capito:

24. As you know, I am working on legislation that would redesignate the New River Gorge National River as a National Park and Preserve. Under its current designation, hunting and fishing is explicitly authorized as a result of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, which states that "The Secretary shall permit hunting and fishing on lands and waters under his jurisdiction within the boundaries of the New River Gorge National River in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws." In this particular instance, the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources (WVDNR) is given administrative jurisdiction over these activities. I will maintain this provision in my National Park and Preserve bill, in order to ensure that West Virginia's tradition of hunting and fishing is preserved.

- a. If confirmed, will you make sure that all hunting and fishing guidelines mandated under existing statute are observed and that the National Park Service (NPS) or the Department of the Interior (DOI) as a whole will not subsume authorities Congress has granted to WVDNR or any other state agencies with regard to hunting and recreational activities in a NPS or DOI administered public land unit?

Response: As I noted at my hearing, the first and foremost rule is to follow the law. If confirmed, I commit to doing so, and look forward to working with you and your office on issues related to hunting and fishing at the New River Gorge National River.

- b. Can I have your commitment that you will work with my office on this issue as we work to finalize, advance, and implement this legislation?

Response: Yes, you have my commitment.

25. There has been some concern among my constituents over comments made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) that regards other environmental statutes – independent of the Endangered Species Act – as being inadequate in protecting listed species. The concern is that these conclusions will lead the agency to “go outside of its lane” and impinge on other agencies’ prerogatives in the environmental review process. In particular, the listing of the candy darter included language expressing FWS’s concerns that the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act, the Clean Water Act, and West Virginia’s own environmental statutes have been insufficient to protect the habitat of the candy darter. That suggests FWS is looking to overtake or otherwise assume the authorities of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement – within your Department – the Environmental Protection Agency, the Army Corps of Engineers, and West Virginia’s Department of Environmental Protection and Department of Natural Resources.

- a. If confirmed, will you ensure that FWS stays within its jurisdiction with regards to regulatory determinations and mitigation directives under the Endangered Species Act?

Response: Yes.

Senator Cardin:

26. The Chesapeake Bay watershed region has begun to feel the effects of a changing climate, which has repercussions for the entire ecosystem. Over the last century, the average air temperature along the coastal margins of the Chesapeake Bay has warmed 1.4 degrees Fahrenheit. Between 1950 and 2000 water temperatures rose about 2°F. These warmer air and water temperatures can change the plant and animal species in an area, contribute to expanding dead zones and algal blooms, and encourage the expansion of hardy invasive species such as nutria. Do you feel the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks has a responsibility to provide policy guidance and direction for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service that considers climate adaptation measures to protect and preserve the Nation’s fish and wildlife resources?

Response: Within the purview of the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, part of my job would be to help fish and wildlife and plants adapt to the impact of a changing climate and moderating those impacts through the application of the best science, planning, research and monitoring tools available to managing species and habitat.

27. The Chesapeake Bay Program is a regional partnership that includes six states, three state legislatures, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and more than two dozen other federal agencies. The National Park Service administers the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network to help people experience the Chesapeake Bay and understand how to become involved in protecting and restoring this national treasure.

- a. Do you agree these programs are of national significance?

Response: Yes, I do.

- b. Will you commit to supporting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service Chesapeake Bay field offices as Assistant Secretary through robust budget and staffing requests?

Response: From my experience both in the private and public sector, I know that sufficient resources, both funding and human capital, are necessary to accomplish any organization's goals. I understand Congress ultimately determines agency budgets. If confirmed, I commit to assessing the various programs within the NPS and FWS and to approach any budget conversation with aim of increasing operational efficiency and maximizing use of limited taxpayer dollars.

Senator Markey:

28. I am extremely concerned about the May 3, 2019 proposed rule to downlist the American Burying Beetle from endangered to threatened. I will send a letter to Secretary Bernhardt in the near future requesting further information regarding this delisting decision. Will you commit to working with Secretary Bernhardt to get me a response in a timely fashion?

Response: If confirmed, I will make it a priority to engage in and maintain communication with this Committee and would welcome the opportunity to learn more about the issue you raise.

Senator Rounds:

29. As you may know, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does not offer any termed easement options to landowners interested in participating in conservation practices. Currently, landowners interested in taking an easement out on their property are only offered perpetual easement agreements that permanently limit the land's production practices, even when ownership changes hands. If confirmed, would you consider developing a termed-easement option, such as 20 and 30 years, to go along with the standard perpetual easements and additional short-term conservation practices currently available to landowners?

Response: Although I am not currently at the Department and do not have the latest information on the legal, regulatory and budgetary parameters concerning this matter, if confirmed, I will work to better understand the issue and examine potential solutions.

Senator Sullivan:

30. How would you ensure that Title V of the Marine Mammal Protection Act is implemented so that the Alaska Native polar bear co-management organization is properly delegated the authority and is allocated the resources to implement a local, civil-based co-management regime for Chukchi Sea polar bears?
31. How would you ensure Alaska Native marine mammal organizations are adequately funded to carry out co-management activities under the Marine Mammal Protection Act?
32. The sea otter population in Southeast Alaska is having adverse impacts on commercial fisheries. New management tools and better engagement with the Alaska Native community are needed to provide active management of this species, as well as continued subsistence hunting in the region. Will you commit to travelling to Southeast Alaska for a summit to engage with affected stakeholders on this pressing issue?

Response: I would welcome the opportunity to visit with you and stakeholders in Alaska to discuss and learn more about these issues.

Senator Wicker:

33. The Jackson, Mississippi area has had two catastrophic floods that damaged thousands of homes and businesses and continues to remain at risk. However, a meaningful flood control solution has been unable to advance for decades. The Pearl River Flood and Drainage Control District has developed a plan to bring meaningful flood control to the capital region. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has been involved with the Pearl River Basin Flood Control Project from the beginning. USFWS is developing two reports, the Biological Opinion and the Coordination Act Report, which can have a significant impact on the project's progress. These reports should be prepared impartially and should be guided by science and the law. Will you commit to ensuring that law and science guide the Biological Opinion and the Coordination Act Report for the Pearl River Basin Flood Control Project?

Response: Yes.

34. The Fiscal Year 2019 Interior and Environment Appropriations bill included report language that directed USFWS to expedite review and recommendations for the flood control project in the Pearl River Basin. Will you commit to ensuring the Biological Opinion and the Coordination Act Report are prepared without delay?

Response: If confirmed, I commit to advancing the Secretary's goal of ensuring that environmental reviews under the purview of the Assistant Secretary of Fish and Wildlife and Parks will be conducted in accordance with the law and completed in a timely manner.

Senator Van Hollen:

35. On December 22, 2017, the Department issued a Solicitor's Opinion, or M-Opinion, on the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which ended longstanding protections for migratory birds. This Opinion gave oil and gas companies and other corporate interests a free pass for killing migratory birds from oil spills, toxic waste pits, and more, putting nearly every bird species in my state at greater risk. The Opinion has been strongly opposed by former senior Interior officials from every Republican and Democratic administration since the early 1970s, along with numerous states and the Flyway Councils that represent them, and hundreds of organizations representing millions of Americans.

I have twice written to the Department about this M-Opinion, and my strong concern that the Department is no longer able to collect MBTA fines or penalties in the aftermath of an oil spill because of changes made by the M-opinion. In fact, in a February 21, 2019 response to me, the Department admitted the following: "In practice, the new M-opinion means that if an oil or hazardous chemical release occurs and is not done with the intent of taking migratory birds, the MBTA does not apply."

Is the Department currently working on a rulemaking that would codify the M-opinion on the MBTA?

Can I get your commitment to work with me on a bipartisan way forward on the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, in a way that ensures that we can still collect penalties for the mass killings of migratory birds in the aftermath of major human-caused disasters, like oil spills?

Response: Having not served at the Department in this Administration, I am not aware of any administrative rulemakings that have not been publicly noticed. If confirmed, you have my commitment to work with you and to ensuring the laws the Department is charged with implementing are carried out effectively.

36. Can you please provide me with an update on staffing at the Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge?

Response: I am not familiar with this issue or your perspectives on it, but would be happy to look into the topic and learn more about it, should I be confirmed.

Senator BARRASSO. Thanks so much for your testimony. Welcome to your family here today.

Throughout this hearing, and with questions for the record, the committee members are going to have the opportunity to learn more about your commitment to public service for our great Nation.

I have to ask a couple of questions for the record, which we do of all nominees. The first is, do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this committee or designated members of the committee and other appropriate committees of Congress and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities?

Mr. WALLACE. I do.

Senator BARRASSO. And do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings, documents and electronic and other forms of information are provided to this committee and its staff and other appropriate committees in a timely manner?

Mr. WALLACE. Yes.

Senator BARRASSO. And do you know of any matters, which you may or may not have disclosed, that might place you in any conflict of interest if you are confirmed?

Mr. WALLACE. I do not.

Senator BARRASSO. I will now begin with questions. Then we will alternate back and forth, Senator Carper will go after I do.

Can you just explain a little bit about how your experiences that you have had prepared you to oversee the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service? You talked a bit about it in your opening statement. Anything else that comes to mind in terms of specific experience? I know you have been a rescue ranger, worked the back country, have seen it from all different levels.

Mr. WALLACE. I think one of the great things about being here at this time in my career is having seen a lot of different aspects of both the Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Endangered Species Act, to the point where you see the power of good people coming together to solve complicated problems. I have seen that throughout my career. I know you all work with it every day in the committee.

But it is the belief, as I said in my statement, people working in good faith on complicated issues can achieve remarkable, good things.

Senator BARRASSO. And along that line, I think about the American Water Infrastructure Act that we got through the Senate 99 to 1, it authorizes increased funding for things like watercraft inspection stations, in order to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species. The committee also led the enactment of the WILD Act, Wildlife Innovation and Longevity Driver Act, requires the specific agencies to develop strategic plans to reduce invasive species, on lands that they manage, and provides, actually, cash prizes for innovative solutions to better combat the invasive species.

What is your assessment, if I could, of the invasive species threat to our Nation's wildlife in the national park system, and can we better use and coordinate efforts along those lines?

Mr. WALLACE. That is a question I have thought a lot about since the President nominated me for this position. We have, Senator Barrasso, as you know, invasive species in Wyoming, whether it is

cheat grass or lake trout in Yellowstone or even trying to prevent quagga mussels from getting into the Snake River drainage and getting all the way down into the Columbia River. Every time I heard the word invasive species, I think it is just going to turn out like a bad vampire movie, because it is something that whatever you do, you are not going to be able to curtail.

I think, if confirmed for this position, it is a chance to really think through what the departments are already doing, and see if we have to take our game up to a different level. Because they are everywhere.

Senator BARRASSO. I am thinking about the time you were chief of staff for Governor Geringer. He served at the same time Senator Carper was a Governor, so we have the State side of this, then we have the Federal side of it. Do you have any thoughts on how we can foster better coordination between Federal and State wildlife agencies? Because States are putting a lot of money into wildlife efforts as well.

Mr. WALLACE. I have. The word partner is a very easy word to say, we all say partner, but it is a lot harder to do. It takes a lot of work. What do you mean by partnerships? It is respecting the government-to-government partnerships between tribes and between States and sometimes local communities, it is respecting the partnerships between NGO's and conservation groups that care deeply.

And a partnership is a partnership. That is what you commit to, you work with a State, you get the best advice from the professionals that work on an issue, and you work constructively toward a solution.

Senator BARRASSO. And I want to pick up on the word partnership, because, as you used it, under the leadership of this committee, the reauthorization of what is the Partners for Fish and Wildlife program was enacted into law in March. It is a voluntary program encouraging U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and private landowners, because I had asked you about State and Federal, but I am talking about now U.S. Fish and Wildlife and private landowners to work together on habitat conservation and restoration projects. Can you talk about proactive, voluntary conservation efforts, by landowners, private entities, when it comes to protecting wildlife and their habitat?

Mr. WALLACE. I look forward to working with you and the committee and others and implementing that Act, if confirmed.

Senator BARRASSO. So there is an important role, working with the private landowners as well, and other private entities, in terms of working along those lines.

As Assistant Secretary, you are going to oversee both the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. Although these agencies have fundamentally different missions, the authorities often overlap, certainly on lands across the west. You have seen it first-hand in Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks. The lands provide habitat for important species and are also drivers of the local economies. You see it all around Wyoming.

If confirmed, how would you balance the diverse and sometimes competing missions of these two different agencies that you will oversee?

Mr. WALLACE. I think, Senator, the issue there is the interagency working groups that have come together on grizzly bears and others that we have seen throughout Wyoming and I am sure in other parts of the west. It is making sure those interagency groups are working together, coordinating with one another and not creating confusing data for the public to digest and try and understand.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you. Senator Carper.

Senator CARPER. I was happy to hear the name Jim Geringer. We served together 6 years, I was elected in 1992, he was elected in 1994. Wonderful man, and it was a joy to serve with him.

I don't mean to ask a bunch of yes or no questions. I would ask three of them, and then I'll ask questions that will take more than yes or no to respond to.

The first question is, do you agree with our Nation's leading scientists, including those within the Department of Interior, who have concluded that climate change is real, is caused in large part by humans, and is impacting fish, wildlife and parks? Do you agree with that?

Mr. WALLACE. Senator, I do agree that climate change is an issue and that humans have a very important role in that situation.

Senator CARPER. That is good. Thank you. Second question. Do you question the conclusions of the Fourth National Climate Assessment that stated our Nation's ecosystems and economy are at grave risk in the decades to come if we do not take climate actions today?

Mr. WALLACE. Senator, to be perfectly honest, I haven't read the assessment. I am aware of it, along with the IPCC 1.5. Yes, I am aware of the issues. I know that scientists are clearly moving in that direction. But to be fair, I have not read the report.

Senator CARPER. I will just ask you to answer again, for the record.

Mr. WALLACE. OK.

Senator CARPER. Thank you.

Last yes or no question. Do you commit to this committee that if confirmed, you will not directly or indirectly interfere or undermine climate science?

Mr. WALLACE. Senator, I believe in the importance of climate science and the independence of science.

Senator CARPER. I will take that, thank you. Followup question, if I could. As Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, what will you do to make our parks and refuges more resilient in the face of climate change?

Mr. WALLACE. Let me take a drink of water on that one.

Senator CARPER. I will say it again while you take a drink of water. As Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, what will you do to make our parks and refuges more resilient in the face of climate change?

Mr. WALLACE. Let me, if I could, sort of describe my job, if confirmed, how I see it, Senator. If you looked at the combined assets of both the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service, there is approximately 1,000 units in 50 States and 5 territories. If you look at, I guess one way I would look at your climate question is, to understand where the stress is on all of these dif-

ferent agencies, or all of these different areas, and have a system in place where you are systematically evaluating how they stand.

So in the example of climate change, we know that the Governor of Louisiana is trying to adapt for that anticipation by thinking of moving communities up off of southeastern Louisiana. You see the Fish and Wildlife Service doing coastal resiliency projects in North Carolina with oyster bed construction.

In Alaska, with melting sea ice, it is a completely different sort of equation, and how do you evaluate it. And also perhaps the coast of Oregon or Washington State, where they are worried about ocean acidification.

But there are also other issues, I think, that adds stress to it that I could not ignore if in this position. We talked about invasive species, what is habitat fragmentation doing to migratory corridors in other parts. If you care deeply about historic areas in the National Park Service, what about battlefields, like Champion Hills and Vicksburg that may be rounded out if the parks focus on that? So I certainly acknowledge the climate issue, and I also acknowledge that there are other stressors within the system that I would also be responsible for.

But let me tell you how I would look at all three of those. First of all, and foremost, follow the law. What does the law say you have to do, can't do or should do? No. 1. No. 2 is, follow the science. What are your professionals telling you about how to solve these problems? And it is not just the 50,000-foot science, it is the sort of on the ground science, by science managers, applied science, if you will. What are they telling you to do about the problem?

Then the third, and I talked about this with Senator Barrasso, I think it is very important, it is the role of partnerships. You can't solve scale problems unless you can figure out how to be a good partner. Sometimes the Federal Government is the alpha and the partnership debate, and I don't think that is the right construct, especially given so many interests from so many groups around the Country to get involved.

Senator CARPER. We will take that question; I might come back with a question for the record and you can have a chance to think about it and respond further. If we have another round of questions, I will ask a few more questions. Thank you.

Senator BARRASSO. Senator Cramer.

Senator CRAMER. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Mr. Wallace, for being here.

When Secretary Bernhardt was going through this same process, he and I dug in a little a little bit on a few issues that, I don't want to call them North Dakota specific, but they are rather North Dakota-centric. One in particular that centers around the prairie pothole region, and what I think is somewhat of a unique situation for North Dakota, in that our farmers, over the last century or so, in our rectangle up there in the northern part of our Country, had been such great stewards of water that they didn't drain a lot of land when it was vogue to do that throughout the prairie. Consequently, sometimes I think their good actions earlier have been probably biting them a little bit.

So when it comes to specifically WPAs, or the watershed protection area easements that some of our farmers have inherited from

their great-grandfather or grandfathers, with the lack of a clear delineation, historically poor mapping, what I consider an inadequate appeals process, lack of consistency with NRCS, particularly Swampbuster, enforcement inconsistencies, I raised all these issues with the Secretary in hopes that we could work on together, between stakeholders, partners, politically diverging ideals, in a way to provide better clarity for our farmers and avoid what I consider sometimes to be enforcement or regulatory takings.

With your background, it seems to me you like have a great background. I was thinking specifically in fact about your sage grouse habitat mitigation work. I would just sort of challenge you at this level now and then we can certainly get into more specifics at a later time, as you get into the job. Just looking for ideas on how we can help these farmers, both within the legal construct, but then with advice, and like I said, if there is a mitigation plan that can accomplish everybody's goals while at the same time allowing our farmers to continue to grow food for a growing world population.

I just want to plant that seed with you and look forward to a very specific discussion.

Also, by the way, the Secretary committed to coming out to visit with our farmers. If you are confirmed prior to whenever that trip takes place, it would be great if you could join him on that trip. But first of all, just sort of in general, any thoughts about WPA easements and some work that we can maybe get done that again, accomplishes everybody's goals without further taking from our landowners?

Mr. WALLACE. One of the great things about this job, if I am confirmed, is to think about issues that I don't know a lot about. Right now, I can tell you this, Senator, if this is important to you, I will be committed to learning a lot more about it, perhaps coming to visit with you and meet some of your constituents and hear firsthand the challenges you have. And to the degree that it is within my ability in the department to help, given the legal and scientific issues that will also be there, more than happy to do that.

Senator CRAMER. I appreciate that. And I think one of the things you bring to the job, and you and I had not met before, but when you have such a strong endorsement as the two Senators from Wyoming have given, it is hard to argue with you, to be honest, not just because he is the Chairman, because I am a member of two Wyoming Senators' chairmanship, but because they are such quality people.

You seem to be able to bridge the political intricacies pretty effectively. That is not a minor issue. As you point out, Delaware and Wyoming, we oftentimes find big differences. But you seem to have that ability, and I would look forward to tapping into that capacity that you have to accomplish these things.

So I am just going to leave it at that for now, but I look forward to further discussion.

Mr. WALLACE. I look forward to learning more about it, Senator. Thank you.

Senator CRAMER. Thank you. I look forward to further discussion.

Senator CARPER. I would add that there is a Wyoming, Delaware. And it just south of Dover.

[Laughter.]

Senator CARPER. I have great affection for Wyoming, Delaware.

Senator BARRASSO. Senator Braun.

Senator BRAUN. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

This is always an enjoyable conversation for me, because I practice conservation and at home during our recess, will never give up that part of it, get a few fishing trips in and so forth.

I think it is sometimes overwhelming, invasive species. I have been fighting them on my own properties for years. I wonder how far that has gotten out of hand to where we can mostly try to contain rather than eliminate. But I don't want to focus on that now, I want to focus on what I have observed over time and have you weigh in on it.

Twice during the break, I saw bald eagles on private lakes where, my goodness, where until maybe 10, 12 years ago in Indiana, when I was on the White River, had not seen a bald eagle. And now, they were doing so well, they are starting to colonize a lot of small lakes and places where you never imagined.

Beavers, I remember as a kid I saw one on Potoka Lake when I was about 15 years old. It was like a rare sighting. Deer were basically extinct in Indiana until conservation efforts turned around.

I noticed a lot of good stuff, including otters, to where now there is an open season on otters, simply because they have been reintroduced and are doing so well. Bobcats would be on the cusp.

So when we talk about fish and wildlife, weigh in on what is good that is happening. Because it is depressing, to be honest, when we focus on invasive species. I know we need to, just, how do we grapple with it? Talk a little bit about what you have observed over the last few decades and are really wins and pluses, put it in perspective with all the challenges we have.

Mr. WALLACE. Well, Senator, I have observed the same thing that you have over time. When I was a ranger in the Grand Teton, the bald eagles were still at risk. Now, they are abundant. We have also seen in Wyoming peregrine falcons come back, black footed ferrets, through some very collaborative breeding. Sage grouse, which a lot of us have been working to keep off the endangered species list. Whooping cranes, grizzly bears have come back. They have come back in force in Wyoming.

So you sure look at the wise management of these wildlife laws and say, it has been a success. At the same time, you want to know, what can we do better going forward, are there wiser ways to manage, to think about species recovery. I am fully aware that will be a responsibility of mine if confirmed for this job.

Senator BRAUN. So in general, then, I think it would be fair to say that some of the particulars of especially conservation and wildlife preservation, we have a lot of good things to talk about. Would you view either invasive species and/or climate change as being things that in the near term could set back any of that, where we have had such rapid progression in the right direction? Do you view either one of those, because I agree both are intractable issues. We have to find out a way to deal with them.

Do you see any of the gains we have made in somewhat immediate threat, or do you think that is in the longer context as well?

Mr. WALLACE. That is a great question, and I think about it, too, because climate is on the minds of lots of people, the public, members. If you look at what is happening in the Florida Everglades with the Burmese python, there are songbirds at risk of blinking out down there because of that invasive species. In Wyoming, about 25 years ago, a bucket biologist dumped a bunch of lake trout into Yellowstone Lake, as predators of one of the world's richest natural cutthroat populations anywhere in the world. Pound for pound, lake trout wins every time over a cutthroat. That was an important food group for the grizzly bears during the spawning. It really started to upset the entire balance of Yellowstone.

It took biologists a number of years to figure out they had an invasive species problem, and then what to do about it. It was more than just letting everybody go out and catch as many lake trout as they wanted. Because the lake trout were winning that fight every day. They finally brought commercial seiners in from the Great Lakes that are catching hundreds of thousands of lake trout a year. I talked to the superintendent a few days ago, he said they put as much in gill netting down in Yellowstone Lake every year to stretch from Yellowstone to Naples, Florida, just to get a handle on an invasive species.

So it goes to your point, Senator, that I think the Federal agencies and State agencies need to be observant to identifying a potential risk, is it coming, what can you do to prevent it. If it is here, how do you stabilize it, and then what do you do to reverse it. Those threats, I believe there is an Asian Carp Coalition here from members in the Mississippi and the Great Lakes. It is a big issue. I would be glad to have support to think seriously about that.

Senator BRAUN. Thank you.

Mr. WALLACE. Thank you, Senator.

Senator BARRASSO. Senator Markey, welcome.

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

The Monomoy Refuge, Mr. Wallace, in 2015, the Fish and Wildlife Service finalized a revised comprehensive conservation plan for the Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge that reinterpreted the refuge boundaries to include the waters and submerged lands to the west of the refuge. This potentially makes it harder for Chatham residents to moor fishing boats, hunt or collect shellfish in those waters as they have been doing so for years.

The Trump Administration has advocated for more recreational access to public lands, refuges and parks. But in the Monomoy Refuge, the Town of Chatham and its residents are concerned that they are losing their longstanding access.

Mr. Wallace, if confirmed, will you commit to working with me to ensure public access, while also protecting the environment in this special place?

Mr. WALLACE. Senator, I will. I know this is a very important issue to you. You have raised it at Interior. I have had a chance to learn a little bit about it by speaking with your staff recently. If it would be helpful, I would be happy to come up there with you to meet with the people in Chatham and understand it first-hand. Thank you.

Senator MARKEY. Yes, the town of Chatham has been a great steward of these waters, dating back more than 60 years. I am a strong supporter of our national refuges and believe that our beautiful lands and waters deserve protection. It is my hope that we can find a resolution to this issue that continues to protect and safeguard this unique piece of our Country. So I would appreciate it if you would come.

Mr. Wallace, if you are confirmed, you would be in charge of our parks and refuges, a collection of national treasures that belong to all Americans. As Senator Carper has already noted in his questions, climate change is threatening these beautiful wild places. Rainfall is down, wildfires are up, bark beetles and pathogens are spreading and species are disappearing.

Mr. Wallace, to followup on Senator Carper's conversation with you, will you commit to addressing the climate crisis as part of your management of our national parks, wildlife, refuges, if confirmed?

Mr. WALLACE. Senator, yes. The key, as I mentioned earlier, there are three stools to this. You have to adapt and to moderate the consequences of not only climate, but invasive species. But to do that within the law, with what the scientists are telling us and to work in strong partnership to do that work.

Senator MARKEY. Yes, I just don't think it is possible to responsible stewards and conservationists if we are not dealing with the consequences of the climate crisis. It just goes hand in glove for the rest of our lives. We have to responsibly deal with that.

The State of Alaska is proposing the development of a 200-mile industrial road that would cut through the gates of the Arctic National Preserve and bisect one of the longest land migration routes in the world. Western Arctic caribou herd travels as far as 2,700 miles a year from their wintering grounds along the Bering Sea to their calving grounds on the Arctic coastal plain. This migration is longer than the distance between New York and Seattle, and it could be cutoff if this road moves forward.

Mr. Wallace, are you aware of this proposal and the planning process currently underway?

Mr. WALLACE. Senator, I am actually not that familiar. Of course, from the news, but I haven't been down to the Department of Interior yet, having just been the nominee for 22 days. But I know this is an issue that will be in my office and I will be quickly getting up to speed on it.

Senator MARKEY. Obviously, this road is going to have a huge impact on wildlife and public lands in the region. So we are going to be working with you on this overseeing what is going to be taking place here. Because it could have severe adverse impacts in that region. We are just going to be expecting you to work with us to make sure that damage does not occur.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman, very much.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you very much, Senator Markey.

We are fortunate to have joining us now the Senator from Alaska, who may have some input on that very issue.

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really love my colleague, Ed Markey. He and I work together on a bunch of things. But his attention to Alaska sometimes astounds me.

[Laughter.]

Senator SULLIVAN. Because with all due respect to the Senator from Alaska, I care a hell of a lot more about Alaska and my constituents than he does. So I am just trying to get the numbers of miles of roads that Alaska has relative to Massachusetts. My State is probably, well, I know it is 491 times the size of Rhode Island.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Yes, you had to say that.

[Laughter.]

Senator SULLIVAN. But it is probably at least 200 times the size of Massachusetts. And I guarantee you, Massachusetts has more roads than my State. So most Alaskans really want roads.

And here is the thing. Unfortunately, radical environmental groups always do this, oh, my God, everything is going to die when you build a road, a damned road. In most States, you can build a road anywhere you want, and you don't have 80 environmental groups suing to stop it. But in my State, you try to build a road, one damned road, and you will have so many outside groups who don't care about my constituents, suing to stop a road.

Most people just assume you can build a road anywhere in America. Can't build a road in Alaska, though, because of colleagues like my friend, good friend Ed Markey, who want to stop roads.

Senator BARRASSO. What is the number on the roads?

Senator SULLIVAN. We have a third the number of miles of roads than Massachusetts, and we are probably at least 200 times the size of the State. So just take that one there, Mr. Wallace. We are going to be working on making sure—and by the way, when you hear the parade of horribles, remember last time there was a parade of horrible on the porcupine caribou herd is when we built the Trans-Alaska pipeline, one of the most important features of American energy independence in certainly our Country.

The parade of horribles was the porcupine caribou herd was going to be destroyed. It increased four times the size when the pipeline was built. Now, you never hear the radical environmental groups saying that, because it wasn't true. The same stuff is going on with the development of Anwar, which you are going to have a role in, which this Congress passed, the President signed, the Alaskan people want it, almost 70 percent want it.

So we are going to work with you on that as well. But don't believe the hype. We need roads in Alaska. They are not going to harm the caribou. And the outside groups that want to shut down Alaska, who none of them live there, by the way, you are going to listen to my constituents more than those groups, because my constituents want roads, we need roads.

This just kind of aggravates me, as you can see. I have so many Senators caring about roads in my State, when they have a lot more roads than my State does. And it is not fair, it is not fair. You can't build a road in Alaska, because outside groups stop to sue it, sue to stop it. It is outrageous. I wish they would come and sue when you guys in Rhode Island or Massachusetts wanted to build a road. Nobody sues to stop building roads in your States. But they all come to my State.

So we are going to work on that, and we are going to build that road. And it is not going to hurt the caribou at all.

So let me get to my questions. Mr. Wallace, the Supreme Court recently ruled nine to zero, Elena Kagan in a landmark decision for Alaska in a case just recently, called *Sturgeon v. Frost*, which was about ANILCA. I am sure you are familiar with ANILCA, another huge Federal law that tried to lock up Alaska passed in 1980. To just kind of—well, first, have you read the *Sturgeon v. Frost* case?

Mr. WALLACE. Senator, I have not.

Senator SULLIVAN. So before we vote on your confirmation, I think it is critical that you read that decision. Can I get your commitment that you will?

Mr. WALLACE. If it is important to you, Senator, I will do that, yes.

Senator SULLIVAN. It is a really important case. It essentially says that for decades, ANILCA has not been implemented correctly by Federal agencies, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service. So I would like to get a commitment with you, this is a nine to zero Supreme Court case, to work with me as you look to revise your regulations that would implement the holding of the U.S. Supreme Court nine to zero in *Sturgeon v. Frost*. Can I get your commitment to work with me and my office on that?

Mr. WALLACE. Senator, if it is an important issue to you, it will be an important issue to me.

Senator BARRASSO. Can I interrupt for 1 second, Senator? So, ANILCA, for those of us, it is the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act passed in 1980.

Senator SULLIVAN. Correct.

Senator BARRASSO. For some other members of the committee and the audience. Thank you.

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you. And let me ask, I know I am running out of time, I didn't think I was going to talk about roads, but my colleague got me spun up on that.

We have a problem in southeast Alaska with sea otters, which have grown in enormous numbers in terms of population. They are not listed as endangered. And they are having a very negative impact on a very important industry in southeast Alaska, shellfish, fin fish, fisheries. I was just in southeast Alaska the last couple of weeks and this issue is reaching kind of an emergency level proportions.

Can I get your commitment, Mr. Wallace, if confirmed, to work with me and my office on addressing this big issue with regard to the sea otter population and its negative impact on fisheries in Alaska, which is really, like I said, reaching crisis proportions?

Mr. WALLACE. Senator, this is marine mammal issue on taking with the sea otter.

Senator SULLIVAN. It is, and it is also the decimation that they have had with regard to the fishing industry. But the Fish and Wildlife Service has oversight and responsibility as it relates to this issue.

Mr. WALLACE. I commit to learning a lot more about this issue than I know now, and be back to visit with you about it.

Senator SULLIVAN. Great. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Senator Sullivan. Senator Whitehouse.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Thank you, Chairman.

Welcome, Mr. Wallace. The Chairman speaks very highly of you and says that I am probably going to like you. He is a very honorable man and I appreciate that very much.

You do suffer the catastrophic disability of being from a land-locked State, however.

[Laughter.]

Senator WHITEHOUSE. But I think your sense of nature and her beauty is probably animated every time you wake up and see the glow of the dawn on the Tetons. You certainly do come from a special place in the world.

I wanted to ask you a little bit about a local issue, and then an oceans issue. The local issue is that we have a Blackstone Valley park that has been worked on for some time. It is still being fully defined. And unlike other national parks where you start with basically a big empty piece of land, you draw the metes and bounds and you say, that is a park now, this park exists in a very developed environment. It is a series of specific locations threaded through by the historic Blackstone River. It runs up into Massachusetts as well.

It has been described as like a pearl necklace with all these different pearls along the way, and the thread that ties them together is the river. But it has been through being a protected area, it has been through being a national protected river, it has been through a whole variety of iterations on its way to becoming a national park.

So it is not an easy thing to run through. There are a lot of bureaucratic hooks and attachment, there is a lot of stuff going on. And you have to think about park land in a slightly new way to adapt it to the existing developed environment this park will inhabit.

So I am going to need to be able to talk to you about that, and to get your attention. Because this is not the type of park you are used to out west, where you come to the gate and there is the park ranger, and in you go and now you are on park land. This is a very different idea of how you can make a park work. And not only are we trying to thread the river through all of this, we are trying to make sure that the river is traversable through all of this area, so that there are put-ins and take-outs for canoes, and for people who don't want to do that, that there are bike paths that connect all of this.

And all of this is through built areas, and in-built areas. So it has been a long, long, long, long, slow, process I just want to make sure that you will take a good look at this when you get in. I want the chance to come and talk you through what this has been and where we are trying to get, so that you understand that the command level, the complexities of closing out this particular park and launching it as a crown jewel of New England.

Mr. WALLACE. Senator, I look forward to working with you, if confirmed, on this issue. We will certainly know more about it the next time we see each other than I do right now.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. Yes. Well, thank you, and we will get together on that.

Mr. WALLACE. OK.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. The other issue I want to talk with you about is oceans. Again, from Wyoming, we are always a little bit suspicious of landlocked States and how much interest they will have in oceans. The Department of Interior has a long, long history of focusing on the west and on inland and upland issues, without paying much attention to coastal issues. We are now seeing dramatic coastal changes, driven by sea level rise, temperature change, acidification, the concerns that you have mentioned already.

But it makes the coasts a matter of real concern. And I wanted to let you know that not only is it a matter of really grave concern, but it is also a matter of real bipartisan opportunity. Ocean plastics is a critical issue. The Interior Department website talks about the eight million tons of plastic waste that gets dumped in the oceans every year. The President signed Senator Sullivan's and my legislation in a very, how shall we say, lively Oval Office ceremony. It passed unanimously in the Senate. It passed on suspension in the House. We are working on another one that we are hoping will pass unanimously. Senator Inhofe from Oklahoma has been one of our key supporters on all of this.

So what I want you to take away from this is a, we are going to be coming after you on oceans. You need to pay attention to this. It is not just upland and inland any longer. And b, there are big, big bipartisan opportunities for you to help lead and to support in this area. We are often a divided committee. On these oceans issues, acidification, plastics, sea level rise, coastal wetlands, there is enormous potential. Seize the day.

Mr. WALLACE. Again, this is an area, as you noted, I am from a landlocked State. But I am certainly aware of the issues that members like you in the coastal States are grappling with. I look forward to learning a lot more about what we are doing at the Department of Interior, the opportunity for partnerships, coastal resiliency issues. Thank you, I will be smarter on that one, too, the next time I see you.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. And some day, Mr. Chairman, we might even change the name so it is not just the Department of the Interior.

[Laughter.]

Senator WHITEHOUSE. There are some edges that count too.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Senator Whitehouse. And heading to one of those edges, welcome back, Senator Sullivan.

Senator SULLIVAN. Mr. Chairman, thanks again. Mr. Wallace, I just want to reiterate what my friend, Senator Whitehouse, mentioned. There is a great opportunity, we will be introducing our Save Our Seas 2.0 legislation here soon, where we think there is a great bipartisan opportunity. The President and the Administration are really engaged on these issues. And it is actually an environmental issue that is solvable. Estimates are anywhere up from ten rivers, five countries in Asia constitute over 80 percent of the plastic ocean waste in the world.

So there is a lot we can do. Senator Whitehouse has really been the leader on this in the Senate. He and I have been working together the last several years on it. We want to bring you in on that. It is a great area of bipartisan cooperation with everybody on

board, industry, environmental groups, the Trump Administration, Democrats, Republicans. I think we should, as he mentioned, seize the day. So we will have a good opportunity to talk about this in our followup meeting tomorrow, I think.

Senator WHITEHOUSE. And I would just commend the Chairman and the Ranking Member for their bipartisan engagement on this issue as well. It has really been terrific.

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you, Senator Whitehouse.

Senator BRAUN?

Senator BRAUN. Thank you. I have a bill that proposes that we take a defined inventory on the maintenance that is required on Federal properties. Indiana Dunes is now a national park. It was up there a few weeks ago. One of the original homesteads in that area, which was used by the State, it has fallen into disrepair, several million dollars' worth of cost.

What is your opinion on the need to size up to see what the cost is? It is maybe estimated \$15 billion to \$20 billion, no one really knows. Do you think with an asset base that large, that we ought to have an inventory of what the maintenance needs would be?

Mr. WALLACE. Senator, again, having not been down to the department yet, it is one of those issues that I would like to take back to the professionals down there to see how they are thinking about this issue. You are certainly, your question makes a lot of sense. You ought to know what you are trying to fix before you go fix something. Just on the surface of what you just told me, it makes eminently good sense.

Senator BRAUN. I would like you to keep that in the consideration. Once the process is concluded and you are there, I would like you to keep that in mind. Because I think it is important, that is a huge figure. We need to know what it is and then start tackling the problem. Thank you.

Mr. WALLACE. Thank you, Senator.

Senator BARRASSO. Senator Carper.

Senator CARPER. Mr. Wallace, as I mentioned in my opening statement, Delaware is real proud of, not of the fact that we were the last State to have a national park designated, but we were the first State, Delaware was the first State to ratify the Constitution. For seven whole days, Delaware was the entire United States of America.

And we opened things up, we let in Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and I think it has turned out all right most of the time. But our national park actually focuses on Delaware's historical, the arrival of the first Swedes and Finns to America, in Delaware, the Dutch presence in Lewes, Delaware. The last, I believe, the oldest standing house in America is in Lewes, Delaware. William Penn came to America in New Castle, Delaware, brought with him the deeds to what ultimately became Pennsylvania and Delaware. And the Constitution was first ratified in Dover, Delaware on December 7th, 1787.

The National park in Delaware actually tells part of the history of our Country through the eyes of Delaware and through those sites and places in Delaware that I have just mentioned.

The National Park Service has identified a location for a visitor center at the park, but has not yet committed to move to design

and construction. The park is also in need of additional signage and a deer management plan. I would just ask you, if you might be willing to come and visit, if confirmed, to visit our State and take a look at our park and some of what we are really proud of, and also some of our needs.

Mr. WALLACE. Senator, I would be honored to do that. Thank you for the invitation.

Senator CARPER. You are welcome. Thank you for the answer.

Mr. WALLACE. It is a yes, it is a yes.

Senator CARPER. Next question. The Trump Administration has reassigned, I am told, several dozens of senior executive service employees. Some of these employees were outspoken, apparently, on climate change. A number of the reassignments have been perceived as retaliatory. Rather than accept reassignment, several of these dedicated public servants ultimately left the department.

As Assistant Secretary, would you be willing to provide to Congress detailed information about the rationale behind any future SES reassignments upon request? I am not asking about past, looking back. Not retrospective, but in perspective.

Mr. WALLACE. My sense, Senator, is that there would be a lot of privacy information. But again, I am not down there, I am not aware of, I am certainly aware because of the news about the SES issues. I would tell you personally I value greatly the SES people that I have run across during my time in government. I just don't know enough about this issue to make a commitment one way or the other about it. I am sorry, but I don't.

Senator CARPER. All right. Then I am going to ask, would you commit to protect career staff at the Department of Interior, moving forward, and to bolster their expertise instead of suppressing it?

Mr. WALLACE. I am sorry, could you give me that question again, please?

Senator CARPER. Would you commit to protect career staff at the Department of the Interior, and bolster their expertise instead of suppressing it?

Mr. WALLACE. I absolutely would. I am a big believer in the SES program. We have seen the caliber of the leaders that have come through, both in the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Park Service, they are just the tops. So I am a strong proponent of that. I also want a pipeline in place, so if somebody moves on, retires, takes another job, there is a bench to come in and fill behind them of equally capable people.

So yes, sir.

Senator CARPER. Thank you. And one last question. People travel from around the world to view birds and other wildlife at our two national wildlife refuges that sit right on the Delaware Bay. Bombay Hook is one of them, and the other is called Prime Hook. These special refuges employ less than a dozen people, and they have hundreds of acres, cover hundreds and hundreds of acres. But they employ less than a dozen people. The staff works hard to maintain the refuges and makes sure they remain accessible to the public.

Among other important positions, our refuges have a visitor services coordinator and a law enforcement official. As the Trump Administration continues Department of Interior reorganization ef-

forts, would you commit to us today that refuge employees, like Delaware's, will not lose critical staff as a result? And how will you work with refuge managers and project leaders to make sure their staffing needs are met?

Mr. WALLACE. I would be able to answer this, Senator Carper, in a general way, but also with a commitment, if we make that visit to the national park together, maybe also talk more and see more about the issue that you just raised with me personally. But we need motivated men and women in the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service that get up every day and whistle while they go to work.

Senator CARPER. Like we do here in the Senate.

[Laughter.]

Mr. WALLACE. Exactly. I will do it in my job, if confirmed.

[Laughter.]

Mr. WALLACE. So the health and well-being and the training and the morale, there would be 3,000 people under the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, who are all going to be an important priority to me in terms of their training and their morale. I will be happy to learn more about the people in the refuge system that you just spoke of.

Senator CARPER. We appreciate your answers. We probably have a couple of questions for the record, and if confirmed, we look forward to welcoming you, and perhaps your family, to the First State. Thanks very much.

Senator BARRASSO. I want to thank you, Senator Carper.

I do have a letter of support for the nomination of Rob Wallace from the National Wildlife Refuge Association. It is from Geoffrey Haskett, he is the president of the association, who writes, "We believe Mr. Wallace has the background, experience, and leadership abilities to perform in an exceptional manner in the position of Assistant Secretary." I ask unanimous consent to enter this letter into the record.

Senator CARPER. I object.

[Laughter.]

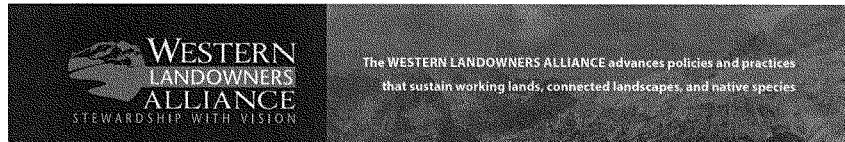
Senator BARRASSO. Then I have 40 more. And they are wonderful letters—

Senator CARPER. I don't object.

[Laughter.]

Senator BARRASSO [continuing]. of over sportsmen, environmental, and conservation groups have written in support of the nomination of Rob Wallace. These groups universally praised Rob's work experience, his knowledge of our Nation's public lands and wildlife. And I ask unanimous consent to enter these into the record.

[The referenced material follows:]



June 3, 2019

The Honorable John Barrasso, Chair
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate, Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper, Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate, Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper,

Western Landowners Alliance wishes to express our support for the nomination of Rob Wallace to be Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior.

Western Landowners Alliance (WLA) represents the management of over 14 million acres of western rangelands and forests through its members. Our members strive to sustain working lands, connected landscapes and native species. The Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks oversees the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service, both of which play a role in advancing conservation of native species. This position also oversees the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The ESA plays a particularly important role in the management and sustainability of both private and public lands. Many private lands provide habitat for species and are a necessary component in preventing ESA listings and providing for recovery of listed species.

Rob Wallace has diverse work experiences that are beneficial for a nominee for the role of Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Mr. Wallace has worked in federal government, state government and in the private sector. He understands the importance of partnerships, including with private landowners, in conserving native species while sustaining economically viable working lands and rural communities. This is apparent through his most recent work to advance greater sage-grouse conservation.

In closing, we support the nomination of Rob Wallace to the position of Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. A swift confirmation is needed to advance policies and programs in a manner that is practical for native species and for the people who depend on the land for their livelihood.

Sincerely,

Lesli Allison
Executive Director
Western Landowners Alliance

505.466.1495

PO Box 6278, Santa Fe, NM 87502

www.westernlandowners.org



June 18, 2019

On behalf of the members and supporters of the National Wildlife Federation and our Wyoming state affiliate, the Wyoming Wildlife Federation, we write in support of the confirmation of Robert Wallace, nominee for Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior.

This important position has remained vacant for far too long. Many critical issues require overdue attention from wildlife species in crisis and habitat at risk to public lands infrastructure in dire need of maintenance. The important role of Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks demands an appointee who understands the importance of protecting our public lands, recovering wildlife populations, expanding recreational access, and restoring balance to the management of our shared natural heritage.

We believe that Mr. Wallace will bring the right skills to this role, informed by his long personal history in conservation and commitment to public service. As a young man, Mr. Wallace worked as a seasonal ranger in Grand Teton National Park before serving as Assistant Director of the National Park Service. As a founding member of the Grand Teton National Park Foundation and a co-founder and President of the Upper Green River Conservancy, Mr. Wallace has firsthand experience bringing communities together to conserve important landscapes and wildlife habitat in his home state of Wyoming—work built upon uniting Americans through our shared conservation values.

We had the pleasure recently of meeting with Mr. Wallace. We discussed the many ways in which this position can serve as a leading voice in the Department for advancing collaborative conservation and bringing a more balanced approach to managing development pressures on our shared public lands. We talked too of the escalating wildlife crisis, which threatens more than one-third of U.S. species and a million species worldwide with potential extinction, unless we act urgently and collaboratively with state agencies, tribes, conservation organizations, industry, and private land owners to restore, reconnect, and improve resilience of habitat; remove invasive species; eradicate disease; reduce toxic pollutants; and act on climate.

From our conversation, and through testimony both before the Senate Committees on Environment and Public Works and Energy and Natural Resources, it is clear that Mr. Wallace has a deep understanding of the issues facing both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service—and the entire Department of the Interior. He is committed to finding science-based solutions and tackling problems in a collaborative way that puts everyone at the table and does not predetermine outcomes. As Mr. Wallace

himself said, in his confirmation hearing, "partner is an easy word to say, but a hard word to implement."

The National Wildlife Federation and the Wyoming Wildlife Federation believe that Rob Wallace will be an excellent Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. We encourage our friends on both sides of the aisle to support his confirmation and work with him to pass important legislation like the Recovering America's Wildlife Act, the Restore Our Parks (and Public Lands) Act, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Permanent Funding Act. We look forward to working with Mr. Wallace as partners in addressing the many challenges America's wildlife and public lands face.

Sincerely,

Collin O'Mara
President and CEO
National Wildlife Federation

Dwayne Meadows
Executive Director
Wyoming Wildlife Federation



The voice of fish and wildlife agencies
 1100 First Street, NE, Suite 825
 Washington, DC 20002
 Phone: 202-838-3474
 Fax: 202-350-9869
 Email: info@fishwildlife.org

June 3, 2019

The Honorable John Barrasso Chair Committee on Environment and Public Works United States Senate Washington DC 20510	The Honorable Tom Carper Ranking Member Committee on Environment and Public Works United States Senate Washington DC 20510
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Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper,

The Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (Association) is writing to offer our support for the nomination of Mr. Rob Wallace to be the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior. Since 1902, the Association's mission has been to support and advocate for state fish and wildlife conservation and to assist those agencies in promoting science-based resource management in collaboration with public and private partners. All 50 states are members.

The Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks oversees the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service, which collectively manage 170 million acres of public lands that provide important fish and wildlife habitat as well as hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation activities. In addition, this position oversees complex issues such as implementation of the Endangered Species Act, state-federal cooperative management of migratory birds, fisheries habitat and species restoration as well as mitigation responsibilities, and the international trade in wildlife among other responsibilities.

Mr. Wallace's knowledge and experience in constructively and successfully helping state, federal, and private interests with navigating the complexities associated with striking a balance of conserving fish, wildlife, and their habitats with other public needs and uses make him an exemplary nominee for the position of Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior. His vast work experience includes senior staff positions in Congress and in the Administration, including Assistant Director of the National Park Service. He also served as Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer's chief of staff and fundamentally understands and respects the important partnership between the states and the federal government when it comes to managing fish and wildlife, and our nation's public lands and waters.

Further, Mr. Wallace also has significant, relevant experience in the private sector. He oversaw government relations for GE Energy, which gave him important experience in the development of both traditional and clean energy resources. Most recently, as a partner at i2 Capital, Mr. Wallace has been intimately involved working collaboratively with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and other public interests in creating market-based approaches to advance conservation of the Greater sage-grouse in Wyoming and across the West.

Finally, Mr. Wallace is a long-time supporter of fish and wildlife conservation. He is an avid hunter and angler, began his career as a backcountry ranger for the National Park Service, and has always been an active user of, and advocate for, America's rich and diverse public landscapes. This Administration would be hard-pressed to find another candidate with more relevant experience, temperament, and judgement for the position, and we strongly support his nomination.

The Association requests the expedient confirmation of Mr. Rob Wallace to be the next Assistant Secretary of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks for the benefit of America's fish and wildlife resources and the state-federal partnership unto that end.

Sincerely,

Ronald J. Regan

Ronald J. Regan
Executive Director



8403 Colesville Road, Suite 710
 Silver Spring, MD 20910-3314
 301-562-0777 tel 301-562-0888 fax
www.aza.org

May 29, 2019

The Honorable John Barrasso
 Chairman
 Committee on Environment and Public Works
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
 Chairman
 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Environment and Public Works
 US Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators:

I write to add my voice to what is certain to be a chorus of accolade for the nomination of Mr. Rob Wallace to serve in the U.S. Department of the Interior, as Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks.

I have had the privilege to know every Assistant Secretary, since the late Nathaniel Reed, who served during the Nixon and Ford Administrations. In my 22 year career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, including nearly 6 years as Director, I served with at least 5 Senate-confirmed Assistant Secretaries. I have a good context for what creates success in this important and challenging position: a passion for the mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service; an appreciation and admiration for the people who do the work; a penchant for listening; and a dedication to inclusive problem-solving. In my view, Rob displays all of these crucial characteristics.

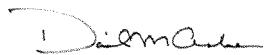
He has one more characteristic, which is increasingly rare today, but key to success in this job: the ability to disagree without being disagreeable, and recognizing that we can agree to disagree on one topic – even stridently – and still work together on matters where we agree.

His pedigree is impressive. I will not repeat it, except to say he has worked successfully, and with distinction, in Congress, in the Executive, at state and federal levels, and in the private sector. This diversity of experience will serve him, the President, the Congress, and the American people well.

The Association of Zoos and Aquariums represents 236 accredited members and over 8000 professional members. We are leaders in animal welfare and wild life conservation, so we are partners to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service, in conserving species like California condor, black-footed ferret, and manatee. AZA members are regulated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species. Therefore, the individual filling this key position is of importance to the AZA and its members, and we are proud to endorse the nomination of Rob Wallace.

We stand ready to aid your deliberation, in every way possible, and urge your swift action.

Sincerely,



Daniel M. Ashe
President and CEO



BEAVER COUNTY COMMISSION

105 East Center P.O. Box 789 Beaver, UT 84713 P: (435)438-6490 F: (435)213-1752	Michael F. Dalton <i>Chairman</i> Mark S. Whitney <i>Member</i>	Tammy T. Pearson <i>Member</i>
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May 22, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
 Chairman
 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 United States Senate
 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso, MD
 Chairman
 Committee on Environment and Public Works
 United States Senate
 410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 United States Senate
 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Environment and Public Works
 United States Senate
 410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski, Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Manchin, and Ranking Member Carper:

The Board of Commissioners of Beaver County, Utah respectfully submit their support for the nomination of Robert Wallace to be Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior.

Beaver County is a rural county in Utah that encompasses 2,592 square miles with a population of approximately 6600 people. 77% of the land is federally owned and managed by either the BLM or USFS. The economy is predominately driven by ranching and agriculture, which in turn, is heavily influenced by the use of the surrounding public lands. Other important economic sectors are mining, timber, energy, outdoor recreation and tourism.

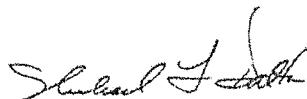
The policies and management decisions made for our public lands that are made in Washington DC have a significant impact on our county. So much of our economy is tied to the public lands that dominate our land base. With public land management so impactful to our lives and economy, we feel it necessary to speak out for those who would represent us well and be mindful of our needs.

With these things in mind, we would like to give support for Presidential Nominee Robert Wallace to be the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Mr. Wallace is a native of Wyoming and has served in the Park Service for many years. He has also served as the staff director for the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Lastly, he was the Chief of Staff for Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer. With this combination of experience and service, we believe he is well qualified to handle this important position in the Department of the Interior. Having good, knowledgeable and qualified people in positions of leadership is so crucial when it comes to managing the role of stewardship of our

public lands. It is also vitally important that those people placed in positions of trust are accountable to the people whose lives are most impacted. We feel that Robert Wallace is well grounded in Western values and understands the impacts felt by public land states in the west.

We urge you to give swift confirmation to Robert Wallace as the Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

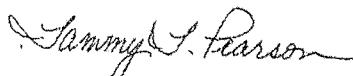
Respectfully,



Michael F. Dalton,
Commission Chairman



Mark S. Whitney
Commission Member



Tammy T. Pearson
Commission Member

Ducks Unlimited Inc. is the world's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving North America's continually disappearing waterfowl habitats. Established in 1937, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 14 million acres thanks to contributions from more than a million supporters across the continent. Guided by science and dedicated to program efficiency, DU works toward the vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever. For more information on our work, visit www.ducks.org.

DU Applauds Wallace Nomination

Rob Wallace nominated to serve as assistant secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior



MEMPHIS, Tennessee – May 6, 2019 – President Donald Trump recently nominated Wyoming native Rob Wallace to serve as assistant secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Wallace has 45 years of experience, having been head of congressional affairs for the National Park Service, worked on Capitol Hill and in the private sector.

“Ducks Unlimited applauds the nomination of Rob Wallace to be assistant secretary of the interior for fish, wildlife and parks. He brings an important mix of Capitol Hill and private sector experience to a vital position in the conservation world,” said Ducks Unlimited CEO Adam Putnam. “We urge the Senate to swiftly confirm him and we look forward to working with him on our critically important mission of conserving, restoring and managing wetlands for North America’s waterfowl.”

In his current role in the private sector, Wallace works with ranchers, energy companies, conservationists and regulators to balance the needs of conservation and energy development in the West. He previously served as manager of government relations for GE Energy, where he co-chaired the Government Relations Operating Council.

Wallace also served as a chief of staff and legislative aide for Sen. Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming, where he worked on the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on Environment and Public Works. Under Interior Secretary Donald Hodel, Wallace served as the assistant director for congressional and legislative affairs at the National Park Service.

“Rob Wallace has a long track record of leadership on National Park Service and Fish and Wildlife Service issues,” U.S. Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt said in a news release. “He will be a fantastic asset to the Department of the Interior, and I urge the Senate to confirm him quickly.”



May 20, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso, MD
Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski, Chairman Barrasso, Ranking Member Manchin, and Ranking Member Carper:

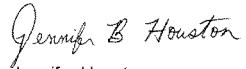
The Public Lands Council (PLC), the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), and the American Sheep Industry Association (ASI) support the nomination of Robert Wallace to be Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior. PLC is the only national organization dedicated solely to representing the roughly 22,000 ranchers who hold federal grazing permits and operate on federal lands. NCBA is the beef industry's oldest and largest national marketing and trade association representing American cattlemen and women who provide much of the nation's supply of food and own or manage a large portion of America's private property. ASI is the national trade organization representing the interests of over 90,000 sheep ranchers located throughout the country who produce America's lamb and wool.

Mr. Wallace is no stranger to public service, nor to the agencies which he would oversee if confirmed. A native of Wyoming, he gained experience at the field level as a park ranger in the state's Grand Teton National Park and eventually was appointed to the position of assistant director of the National Parks Service. After serving as staff director for the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, he returned to Wyoming as chief of staff to Governor Jim Geringer. His breadth of experience in these critical areas at both the state and federal levels, as well as now in the private sector, make him uniquely qualified for the position to which the President has nominated him.

As part of their business operations, livestock producers do vital work that benefits fish and wildlife, as well as the places they call home. They do this by improving water sources, revitalizing habitats, and maintaining the open spaces that all Americans enjoy. Having leaders at the Department of Interior who understand the agriculture industry, and the role it plays in the stewardship of America's lands and species, is vital to ensure the continuity of our national heritage.

PLC, NCBA, and ASI appreciate the opportunity to provide our input on behalf of our members – the nation's food and fiber producers. We urge swift confirmation of Robert Wallace to serve as the Department of the Interior's Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

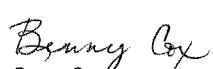
Sincerely,



Jennifer Houston
President
National Cattlemen's Beef Assn.



Bob Skinner
President
Public Lands Council



Benny Cox
President
American Sheep Industry Assn.



NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION, INC.

Headquarters: 11 Mile Hill Road, Newtown, CT 06470-2359

400 N. Capitol Street NW, Suite 475, Washington, D.C. 20001

202-220-1340 ext. 249 lkeane@nssf.org

Lawrence G. Keane
SVP Gov't & Public Affairs
Assistant Secretary & General Counsel

May 20, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin III
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin:

On behalf of the National Shooting Sports Foundation's more than 10,000 members, I am writing to express our strong support for the confirmation of Rob Wallace as the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the U.S. Department of the Interior.

An avid hunter, angler, and recreational shooter, Mr. Wallace is passionate about issues important to the sportsmen-conservation community. Throughout his public service on Capitol Hill and at the National Park Service, Rob has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to conserving and protecting our nation's National Parks, Wildlife Refuges, and fish and wildlife.

Having served as Assistant Director and Head of Congressional Affairs to the National Park Service, Staff Director to the Senate Energy and Natural Resource Committee, Chief of Staff to former Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer, as well as a ranger in Grand Teton National Park, Mr. Wallace is uniquely qualified to balance the needs of wildlife conservation, recreational management, and use of our public lands.

Mr. Wallace is a true conservationist, and throughout his forty-five-year career, he has been a devout steward of America's public lands. For example, while serving as manager of government relations for GE Energy, Rob co-founded two conservation organizations in western Wyoming, the Grand Teton National Park Foundation and the Upper Green River Conservancy. The first funds projects that enhance, promote, and protect Grand Teton National Park in northwest Wyoming, and the latter protects critical sage grouse habitat in southwest Wyoming.

For these reasons, the National Shooting Sports Foundation® urges the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to approve Rob Wallace's nomination as the next Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior so that the full Senate can act to confirm him as soon as possible.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lawrence G. Keane".

Lawrence G. Keane



May 24, 2019

The Honorable John Barrasso
 Chair
 Environment and Public Works Committee
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper
 Ranking Member
 Environment and Public Works Committee
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

On behalf of the National Wildlife Refuge Association, we would like to share our support for Rob Wallace as you consider his nomination to be Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks in the Department of the Interior. For over 40 years, the Refuge Association has advocated on behalf of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the largest system of lands in the world dedicated to wildlife conservation. We believe Mr. Wallace has the background, experience, and leadership abilities to perform in an exceptional manner in the position of Assistant Secretary.

Rob Wallace founded the Upper Green River Conservancy in his home state of Wyoming in 2015, after a long career as staff director for a Senate committee and in private and public positions. In these positions, he has worked with all manner of public agencies, including those within the Department of the Interior, with landowners seeking solutions to conservation concerns such as sage grouse initiatives, and with private companies on sustainable energy development. Mr. Wallace has worked effectively with both Republican and Democratic Administrations and we believe he will competently and effectively lead the Fish and Wildlife Service and other land management agencies under his purview.

The integrity and habitat value of the Refuge System is paramount to the viability of wildlife populations across the continent. It is our hope that, in this position, Mr. Wallace will examine the enormous benefits these refuge lands bring to wildlife and to our communities and advocate for the resources necessary to manage these lands appropriately.

Thank you for your consideration of Rob Wallace to serve the Department as Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks. Please let me know if we can assist in any way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geoffrey L. Haskett".

Geoffrey L. Haskett
 President



NPCA Position on Rob Wallace for Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks

May 20, 2019

Dear Senator,

Since 1919, National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) has been the leading voice of the American people in protecting and enhancing our National Park System. On behalf of our more than 1.3 million members and supporters nationwide, we urge you to support the nomination of Rob Wallace as Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks – responsible for oversight of the National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

On May 3, President Donald Trump nominated Mr. Wallace for this important Interior post. If confirmed, Wallace would play an instrumental role in supporting the mission of NPS to protect and keep unimpaired our most incredible resources – natural, cultural and historic –for future generations to experience and enjoy.

Wallace would bring 45 years of public service to the position, including serving as the head of congressional affairs for NPS. Wallace is a Wyoming native and currently a 5-year resident of Teton Village, Wyoming, adjacent to Grand Teton National Park. In fact, he began his career as a seasonal Grand Teton National Park river ranger.

Most recently, he led the Upper Green River Conservancy, which included a diverse group of stakeholders, including ranchers, conservation groups and industry representatives working together to preserve sage grouse habitat in the Upper Green River watershed in Wyoming. Wallace led the group to a successful resolution and management plan intended to balance the habitat needs of the grouse with other industry and agricultural uses in the area. Wallace has served on many philanthropic educational and conservation-oriented boards in Wyoming and has a deep understanding of the importance of the national parks and the iconic beauty and rich and diverse wildlife of Grand Teton National Park. Wallace was instrumental in supporting protection and acquisition of state-owned inholdings within the park in 2016. He understands the complexity of local issues that impact national parks; as well as the breadth of the work that the NPS faces across the country.

Headquarters

777 6th Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001
P 202.NAT.PARK | 800.628.7275

NPCA.org



In NPCA's experience, Wallace understands the many diverse opinions surrounding national parks and has shown his commitment to inclusive community-based dialogue and solutions. He has been a dedicated participant and leader in public lands and wildlife management and most recently has demonstrated his ability to bring diverse stakeholders together to preserve sage grouse habitat in Wyoming. Wallace has demonstrated his ability to work in bi-partisan manner--working effectively with both Republican and Democratic administrations.

We are confident that Mr. Wallace will bring experience and sound decision-making to his post as Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks. We believe he is capable of and willing to tackle the obstacles facing our parks and other public lands, including threats from development, air and water pollution, climate change, record visitation and ever-present funding challenges for the agencies managing these resources.

Recognizing how long this important Department of the Interior post has been vacant, we applaud Mr. Wallace's nomination and we look forward to his timely confirmation as Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks. NPCA supports him and all the important work ahead to ensure the protection and future of our national parks.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Theresa Pierno, President & CEO

Headquarters

777 6th Street, NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20001
P 202.NAT.PARK | 800.628.7275

NPCA.org

5/29/2019 Public Lands Council on Twitter: "We are pleased with @WhiteHouse announcement to nominate Rob Wallace as the Assistant Secretar...



Public Lands Council

@PLCranching

[Follow](#)



We are pleased with @WhiteHouse announcement to nominate Rob Wallace as the Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks! Our full statement: bit.ly/2LqapGj

7:19 AM - 6 May 2019

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Richard I. G. Jones, Jr., Esq.
1107 Nottingham Road
Wilmington, DE 19801
(302) 584-4650 | rigjjr@gmail.com

May 14, 2019

The Honorable Tom Carper
United States Senate
513 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: Nomination of Rob Wallace for Assistant Secretary of Interior

Dear Senator Carper:

I write in support of Rob Wallace's nomination for Assistant Secretary of Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. I know Rob well. He is a committed conservationist, a thoughtful leader and a man of deep integrity. He is also extremely knowledgeable about the two subject areas over which he would have oversight responsibilities – Fish & Wildlife and Parks.

Rob is currently my wife's business partner in i2 Capital, a DC-based impact investment firm focused on building new models for scaled conservation. Among other projects, i2 Capital partnered with The Nature Conservancy in Delaware on the Brandywine-Christina Revolving Water Fund, which you kindly supported on a successful application for a major USDA Conservation Innovation Grant. Under Rob's leadership, i2 Capital also recently established the Upper Green River Conservancy, an innovative mitigation bank for sage grouse in Wyoming. Both projects demonstrate Rob's deep appreciation of the need to balance nature and commerce.

A Wyoming native, Rob is a life-long conservationist. During college, he supplemented his income by guiding raft trips on the Snake River. After graduating, he joined the National Park Service as a seasonal ranger in Grand Teton National Park. While his primary responsibility was patrolling Jackson Lake, he also worked as a member of the mountain and river rescue teams, performed law enforcement and emergency medical duties on the Park's highways, and led winter backcountry ski patrols across Yellowstone and Grand Teton.

Rob is also a familiar and respected figure on Capitol Hill. In 1977, he joined the staff of U.S. Senator Malcolm Wallop of Wyoming, serving as Senator Wallop's legislative assistant on two key committees – Energy and Natural Resources and Environment and Public Works – with jurisdictions over the National Park Service and the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

During the Reagan administration, Interior Secretary Donald Hodel appointed Rob Assistant Director of the National Park Service (NPS) for congressional and legislative affairs. As the Capitol Hill liaison for NPS Director William Penn Mott, Rob supervised a legislative

agenda that increased visitor entrance fees to the direct benefit of park units, provided critical resources to fight the 1988 Yellowstone fires, revised concession management practices, and added several new units to the national park system. Rob also championed the creation of the Bevinetto Fellowship, a prestigious training program providing mid-level NPS employees with Capitol Hill experience.

Rob rejoined Senator Wallop's office as Chief of Staff in 1989 and, in 1991, became the Republican staff director of the Senate's Energy and Natural Resources Committee. He helped devise Senate strategy that led to enactment of the Energy Policy Act of 1992. Interior and Energy department matters were under his supervision, including national energy policy, and legislation and oversight governing U.S. trust territories, public lands management, endangered species, and the National Park Service.

Rob left the Senate in 1994 to seek election to Wyoming's only seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. After an unsuccessful primary bid, he became Chief of Staff to Wyoming's newly elected governor, Jim Gerlinger. Rob organized the Governor's executive office, managed cabinet affairs, and served as liaison to the state legislature.

From 1995-2012, Rob was based in Washington, D.C. as Manager of Government Relations for GE Energy, which sells and services advanced energy platforms, including wind generation. He co-chaired GE Energy's Government Relations Operating Council, which coordinated the company's energy advocacy throughout the world.

Throughout his career, Rob has maintained his strong commitment to conservation. He is a founding member of the Grand Teton National Park Foundation and sits on the boards of the Teton Science Schools and the Jackson Hole Land Trust. He is a past board member of the Yellowstone National Park Foundation, City Kids, the Murie Center and the Student Conservation Association. It is no wonder that Ducks Unlimited enthusiastically endorsed Rob's nomination for Assistant Secretary.

I have known Rob for more than five years. He is a great listener, a deliberate thinker and a kind and generous person. These qualities merged with his extensive experience in safeguarding our nation's natural resources uniquely qualify him to be excellent Assistant Secretary of Interior. I wholeheartedly support his nomination.

I understand Interior soon will be scheduling visits for Rob on Capitol Hill. I would be most grateful if you would agree to meet with him. In the meantime, I am available should you have any questions or concerns.

Very truly yours,

Richard I. G. Jones, Jr., Esq.

We cordially invite you to visit and experience firsthand the balance of natural resources we have achieved in Rio Blanco County. We applaud the nomination of Robert Wallace for the position of Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior. It is vitally important to our community to have a man with his knowledge and experience as Assistant Secretary. We strongly encourage the Senate to confirm his nomination quickly.

If you have any questions, or would like to speak with us individually, please email us at bocc@rbc.us, or feel free to contact us at our individual telephone numbers listed below.

Sincerely,

The Board of County Commissioners
of Rio Blanco County, Colorado



Jeff Rector
Chairman
(970) 629-2614



Si Woodruff
Commissioner
(970) 942-8734

Gary Moyer
Commissioner
(970) 629-5136

JEFF RECTOR
Chairman

SI WOODRUFF
Commissioner
bocc@rbc.us

GARY MOYER
Commissioner



RIO BLANCO COUNTY
 BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
 COUNTY ADMIN BUILDING, 555 MAIN STREET
 P.O. BOX 599
 MEEKER, COLORADO 81641
 970-878-9430

May 28, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
 Chairman
 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 United States Senate
 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 United States Senate
 304 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso, MD
 Chairman
 Committee on Environment and Public Works
 United States Senate
 410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Environment and Public Works
 United States Senate
 410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

RE: Robert Wallace Nomination

Dear Committee on Energy and Natural Resources & Committee on Environment and Public Works:

The Board of County Commissioners of Rio Blanco County, Colorado would like to thank you for your nomination of Robert Wallace for Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, and Parks at the Department of the Interior. Rio Blanco County is made up of 6,668 people, and covers approximately 3,200 square miles in northwest Colorado.

Rio Blanco County is home to significant amounts of public land. It has vast natural resources, including coal, natural gas, and timber. Our region is home to one of the largest elk and deer herds in the country. We also offer many great fishing and outdoor recreational opportunities. Rio Blanco County has some of the oldest privately held ranches and agricultural operations in the state. We are the home of Colorado's oldest Rodeo, celebrating its 134th anniversary this year. Throughout its existence our county has balanced agricultural, resource development, and recreation, for more than 100 years and boast some of the cleanest air and water in the country.

Mr. Wallace is no stranger to public service, nor to the agencies, which he would oversee if confirmed. He has extensive knowledge of natural resources and has illustrated the ability to balance the diverse issues facing agriculture, recreation, resource development, and wildlife. We strongly believe his experience in these critical areas of at the state and federal level, as well as the private sector, make him uniquely qualified for the position.

JEFF RECTOR
Chairman

SI WOODRUFF
Commissioner
bacc@rbco.us

GARY MOYER
Commissioner

OUTH DAKOTA STOCKGROWERS ASSOCIATION

426 Saint Joseph Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

605-342-0429 (o)
605-342-0463 (f)

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman, Senate Committee on
Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman, Senate Committee on
Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Ranking Member, Senate Committee on
Environment and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Energy
and Natural Resources
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

June 6, 2019

Dear Chairman Barrasso, Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Carper, and Ranking Member Manchin,

The South Dakota Stockgrowers Association advocates for livestock producers across South Dakota and beyond. On behalf of our diverse membership and independent livestock producers across the country, we enthusiastically write in support of the confirmation of Robert Wallace to the position of Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks under the Department of Interior and urge your support.

America's livestock producers represent a strong tradition of supporting wildlife habitat, natural resources and open space across the country through careful resource management. Our members support rural communities, the tax base, and local businesses; all while providing domestic food and fiber. Balancing diverse interests, we can continue to promote wildlife habitat, preserve our natural resources, and support domestic grazing. As a Wyoming native with a history of working with ranchers and stakeholders, we know that Mr. Wallace shares our belief that through collaboration we can manage our public resources for the betterment of the nation.

Mr. Wallace's background working for the State of Wyoming and this committee as an aide for Senator Wallop have given him a deep bench of experience that will benefit the agency far beyond his tenure. He not only understands the challenges facing the West and our public resources, but the nation's high expectations for the responsible management of these resources. We are proud to express our support of his nomination to your committee.

We appreciate your dedicated leadership to our nation's agricultural producers and urge your committee to act swiftly to confirm Mr. Wallace to this critical post.

Sincerely,

Gary Deering
President

James Halverson
Executive Director

office@southdakotastockgrowers.org

www.southdakotastockgrowers.org


BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Natalia D. Macker, Chair
 Greg Epstein, V-Chair
 Mark Barron
 Mark Newcomb
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May 13, 2019

The Honorable John Barrasso
 Chairman
 Committee on Environment and Public Works
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
 Chairman
 Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
 United States Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Environment and Public Works
 US Senate
 Washington, DC 20510

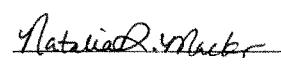
Dear Senators:

The Teton County Board of County Commissioners write to express our full and enthusiastic support for the nomination of Rob Wallace to serve as the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks in the U.S. Department of the Interior. The County Commission urges a swift Senate confirmation of Mr. Wallace to this position.

Mr. Wallace has extensive experience in public service and working with the U.S. National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. To say that he will serve as an asset to the Department would be an understatement. Mr. Wallace's extensive experience, knowledge, and commitment to our national parks and wildlife are invaluable and his commitment to public service is evidenced throughout his career.

We commend his nomination to your favorable consideration.

Best Regards,



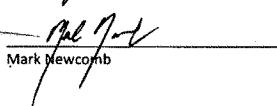
Natalia D. Macker, Chairwoman



Greg Epstein, Vice-Chair



Mark Barron



Mark Newcomb



Luther Propst

PO Box 3594 | 200 South Willow Street | Jackson, Wyoming 83001 | 307.733.8094 | tetoncountywy.gov

SERVICE • COLLABORATION • ACCOUNTABILITY • EXCELLENCE • POSITIVITY • INNOVATION

The Honorable John Barrasso
 Chair
 Committee on Environment and Public Works
 United States Senate
 Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper
 Ranking Member
 Committee on Environment and Public Works
 United States Senate
 Washington DC 20510

June 3, 2019

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper,
 The undersigned hunting, fishing, conservation, and outdoor recreation organizations are writing to offer our collective support for the nomination of Rob Wallace to be Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks at the Department of the Interior.

The Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks oversees the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service, which collectively manage 170 million acres of public lands critical to fish and wildlife habitat, hunting and fishing, and outdoor recreation. In addition, the position oversees complex issues such as migratory bird management, implementation of the Endangered Species Act, and the international trade in wildlife.

Rob Wallace is an exemplary nominee for the position of Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. His vast work experience includes senior staff positions in Congress and in the Administration, including Assistant Director of the National Park Service. Rob also served as Wyoming Governor Jim Geringer's chief of staff and he fundamentally understands the important partnership between the states and the federal government when it comes to managing fish and wildlife, and our nation's public lands.

Rob also has critical experience in the private sector. He oversaw government relations for GE Energy, which gave him important experience in the development of both traditional and clean energy resources. Most recently, as a partner at i2 Capital, Rob has been intimately involved in creating market mechanisms to advance sage grouse conservation in the West.

Finally, Rob practices what he will preach as Assistant Secretary. He began his career as a backcountry ranger for the National Park Service, is an avid hunter and angler, and has always been an active user of, and advocate for, America's iconic public landscape. In short, it would be hard to find anyone with stronger experience, temperament and judgement for the position than Rob Wallace, and we strongly support his nomination.

The position of Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife and Parks has been vacant for almost a decade for years, through multiple administrations. It is time to put politics aside and quickly confirm Rob Wallace on behalf of all Americans who care about public lands and well managed fish and wildlife.

Sincerely,
 American Fly Fishing Trade Association
 American Sportfishing Association
 Angler Action Foundation
 Archery Trade Association
 Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
 Backcountry Hunters and Anglers
 Boone and Crockett Club

California Waterfowl Association
Camp Fire Club of America
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Houston Safari Club
Masters of Foxhounds
Mule Deer Foundation
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Deer Alliance
National Marine Manufacturers Association
National Wild Turkey Federation
North American Grouse Partnership
Pheasants Forever
Pope & Young Club
Professional Outfitters and Guides of America
Quail Forever
Quality Deer Management Association
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Safari Club International
Sportsmen's Alliance
Student Conservation Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Wildlife Mississippi

Senator BARRASSO. And speaking of whistling your way to work, I noticed joining us in the back of the room is Kathi Wise, 40 years worked with Malcolm Wallop, worked with you as a member of the staff of Senator Wallop's team. Remains a stellar employee, whistles while she comes to work every day, really a treasure of the Senate. I just want to know if she has always had that kind of dedication and hard work and such character and credibility, or is that something you instilled in her as she was working with you as Malcolm's chief of staff? Or has that always been a part of her life?

Mr. WALLACE. It is a legacy issue, Senator.

[Laughter.]

Senator BARRASSO. Thank you for being here, thank you for bringing your family and so many friends. The opportunity for other members to put questions in for the record, we ask that they submit questions for the record by Thursday, June 6th, close of business. The nominee should respond to the questions by June 12th.

I want to thank you and congratulate you, thank you for your time and thank you for your testimony today. Congratulations.

[Whereupon, at 11:23 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

