

Statement of Peter C. Wright
Nominated to be Assistant Administrator,
Office of Land and Emergency Management
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Chairman Barrasso, Senator Carper and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the privilege of coming before you today as the nominee for the position of Assistant Administrator for the Office of Land and Emergency Management. I am honored that President Trump, Administrator Pruitt and this Committee are considering me for this position.

I would like to thank my wife Nicki, who is here today, and my daughter Audrey, who is watching, for their unwavering support of my career over many years. I would also like to thank my many current and former colleagues from industry, law firms and the ABA's Section of Environment, Energy and Resources for their support and friendship.

I am proud and grateful to have been an environmental lawyer during my 32-year legal career. For much of my career, I have worked in manufacturing sector to support the hard work of millions of Americans committed to making products you use every day. I have worked to support manufacturers and other clients addressing and responsibly resolving the legacy of historic waste management practices and operations. They have relied on me to provide guidance on compliance with a broad array of regulations. I have also had the opportunity to work for two law firms and serve a diverse set of clients.

While I have spent my entire legal career practicing in Indiana, Missouri and Michigan, I have worked on remediation, regulatory and transactional matters in almost every state and in many countries around the world. I appreciate first-hand the importance of and need for cooperative federalism between the EPA Regions and state environmental agencies.

I look forward to the opportunity to serve our country as the Assistant Administrator for the Office of Land and Emergency Management to bring to bear my experience to help implement the recommendations of the Superfund Task Force to achieve the overall goal of better, faster cleanups. Not a day goes by when as I work on Superfund and remediation matters when I do not think about things that could be changed and improved. The time and costs expended on matters ancillary to actual cleanup work -- that provide no environmental benefit -- are staggering. Communities and Congress have understandably been very frustrated, despairing that some cleanups may never be completed.

I also look forward to applying my transactional background to aspects of the Superfund Reform plan that seek to revitalize sites, whenever possible. Communities have been rightly disappointed when the end of a cleanup is a forever fenced off former industrial facility that serves no economic purpose to the community surrounding the site. Fixed, but useless.

I look forward to working with the dedicated personnel at EPA, many of whom I have worked with over the course of my career. I have listened carefully to Headquarters and Regional EPA personnel, as well as my clients, to find pragmatic and productive solutions that advance protection of the environment and public health. I have volunteered my time, alongside many from EPA, to work on the RCRA Corrective Action Project and the ABA's Environmental, Energy and Resource Section focused on improving the practice and performance of Superfund and RCRA through conferences, publications and ongoing dialogue. That collaborative work must continue.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I would again like to thank the President, the Administrator and this Committee for the opportunity to be here today. I would be humbled to join Administrator Pruitt and the OLEM staff in carrying out EPA's important mission. I respectfully request your support, and I look forward to any questions that you or your colleagues may have for me.