

**Mr. Ken Kopocis**

**Personal Statement**

**Committee on Environment and Public Works**

**United States Senate**

**July 23, 2013**

Good Morning Chairman Boxer, Ranking Member Vitter, and other members of the Committee.

I am honored and humbled to appear before you today. I have many memories of being in this room as either a Senate or House committee staff member during my nearly 27 years on Capitol Hill. While I have sat at this table scores of times, this is a distinct perspective.

The greatest rewards in my career have been in assisting both Senators and Representatives in developing bicameral, bipartisan legislation to address the Nation's critical water resources and water quality needs.

However, despite those accomplishments and their rewards, it is my greatest privilege to sit before you as the President's nominee as Assistant Administrator for the EPA Office of Water. If I am confirmed, I hope I can fulfill the President's and Administrator McCarthy's confidence in me.

I have spent the majority of my professional life working to address some of the Nation's most critical water resources needs. This includes eight Water Resources Development Acts; the Water Quality Act of 1987, which strengthened the Nation's commitment to clean water; protecting and restoring the Everglades and the Florida Keys; ending the practice of using our oceans as dumping grounds for sludge and garbage; oil pollution prevention, preparedness and response following the *Exxon Valdez* spill in 1989; and developing targeted programs for the Great Lakes, Chesapeake Bay, Long Island Sound, California's Bay-Delta, Lake Pontchartrain and the Gulf of Mexico, the Tijuana River Valley and San Diego's beaches, and the U.S.—Mexico border region.

I am proud to have had a role in protecting the Nation's beaches and restoring our economically vital estuaries; addressing the impacts of invasive, nonindigenous species; cleaning up hazardous waste, and returning the Nation's industrial legacy to productive use through the Brownfields program, all while protecting public health and the environment.

The Nation has made great strides in protecting public health and the environment while growing the economy, but we have yet to achieve the objective established in 1972 of restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters. If approved by this Committee and confirmed by the Senate, it is my intent to work with all of you toward achieving that objective for this and future generations.

In my work on the Hill, I have had the privilege of working on legislation that, while not always noncontroversial, always enjoyed strong bipartisan support. I learned that true success requires ensuring cooperation and collaboration among all interested and necessary parties. I have always attempted to approach issues with an open mind, interacting with members of the public, State and local officials, and interest groups on legislative and program development and implementation issues; and, analyzing facts and the law to develop solutions to national and local problems.

Chairman Boxer and Ranking Member Vitter, your work on the Water Resources Development Act of 2013 was a tangible demonstration of working together for a common goal.

I learned on Capitol Hill that your allies do not always have the correct answer, and the advocates on the other side of an issue are not always wrong. It should be possible to achieve one's stated goals, and respect the legitimate perspective of others in the debate. I have observed that too often people hear, but do not listen. If approved and confirmed, you can count on me to listen to all perspectives and views.

I believe that we all share a common goal of clean and healthy waters; that we demand the confidence that when we turn the tap anywhere in the United States, there will be an abundant and safe supply of drinking water; that we can restore and protect our precious resources such as the California-Bay Delta, the Everglades, Chesapeake Bay, Lake Pontchartrain and the Gulf Coast, the Great Lakes, and Long Island Sound; that we can swim at our beaches and eat the fish that we catch; and that we can create opportunities for the next generation that exceed those that were present for us.

Thank you, and I welcome any questions you may have.