

**Statement of Jeffrey M. Prieto**  
**Nominee for General Counsel, United States Environmental Protection Agency**  
**Before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee**  
**June 16, 2021**

Good morning Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Capito and other distinguished members of the Committee. I thank you all for your willingness to hold this hearing. It is an honor and a privilege to appear before you as President Biden's nominee for the General Counsel of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). I am humbled by the trust this nomination represents, and I am grateful to President Biden and Administrator Regan for providing me this opportunity. Should I have the privilege of being confirmed, I look forward to continuing a career dedicated to public service.

I am also grateful for a wonderful family who has supported my endeavors. My wife, Sheryl, and my sons, Daniel and Matthew, are with me today. I want to publicly thank my wife for her support, understanding, and patience throughout my career. I could not have achieved my professional and personal dreams without her. I also want to acknowledge my mother, brother, sister, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews and nieces in California. My family is central to my existence and I am so grateful to all of them for their prayers and love. My family has a distinguished history of military service. Members of my family and my community have sacrificed much so that I could have opportunities. I have attempted to repay this debt by serving the public.

In addition to public service and sacrifice, I learned about hard work through my grandfather, Leo Alvarez. He was employed by a lemon packing house in Santa Paula, California, for more than fifty years. It was his and my grandmother, Lucia's, dream that their grandchildren would be the first in our family to graduate from college. My grandparents used what they earned to benefit our family, both in the United States and in Mexico, and their love and generosity changed many lives. Their daughter and my mother Lucy Prieto never fulfilled her own dream of graduating from college, but she worked so that her children could seize opportunity and fulfill the dream my grandparents put forward. Most importantly, she never lost hope and faith in me.

I am beyond proud to represent both my family and my community here today, as I believe they both exemplify the highest ideals of this Nation: hard work, service, faith, sacrifice, and patriotism.

If confirmed, serving as the EPA General Counsel at this moment in time would be the highest honor of my career in public service. I've been privileged to serve previously as a White House Fellow, EPA Attorney-Advisor, Department of Justice Environment and Natural Resources Division Trial Attorney and General Counsel, Senate confirmed General Counsel of the Department of Agriculture, and General Counsel of the Los Angeles Community College District. My previous legal positions have prepared me to serve as the General Counsel of EPA and my federal government experience ensures I understand the responsibilities of the position.

As I have demonstrated in my previous appointment, I will implement the laws of this Nation as specified by the Constitution, expressed by Congress, and interpreted by the Courts. I will provide candid legal advice and counsel to Administrator Regan and to the EPA Senior Executive team that is bound and guided by the rule of law. I look forward to working once again with our respected colleagues at the Department of Justice to defend the Agency's actions when challenged in the courts of law.

I am further pleased by the opportunity to work with the incredibly talented lawyers and professional staff of the EPA Office of General Counsel. I have had the privilege to work with some of these dedicated career attorneys during my Department of Justice tenure. I now look forward to managing and leading this extraordinary office. I have a simple management philosophy of treating colleagues as I hope to be treated. If confirmed, I intend to work collaboratively with some of the finest attorneys and professional staff as we allow the facts, science, and the law to guide our legal analysis and judgement.

Finally, I intend to serve all Americans as EPA seeks to achieve the goals of our environmental laws and of the Biden-Harris Administration. If confirmed, I look forward to listening closely and interacting constructively with Congress, with stakeholders, and with all members of the

general public, especially with those communities that have historically not participated in matters before the Office of General Counsel. I am committed to listening to and learning from all individuals to help me and the Office of General Counsel provide sound legal guidance to Administrator Regan and EPA clients.

Should this Committee honor me by recommending me, and should the Senate confirm me, I will do everything in my power to execute the duties of the General Counsel in a professional, efficient, and expeditious manner. I intend to execute my duties with the highest level of integrity, skill, and professionalism, so as to earn your trust and respect. I am committed to working with the leadership of EPA, Congress, and stakeholders to further the best interests of all Americans.

Again, thank you very much for holding this hearing to consider my candidacy. I am grateful for your time and happy to answer the Committee's questions.