

**Opening statement of Meredith Berger
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Energy, Installations, Environment)**

Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Inhofe, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, it is my honor to be before you today to be considered for the role of Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Energy, Installations, and Environment

I am humbled by the confidence President Biden, Vice President Harris, Secretary Austin, and Deputy Secretary Hicks have placed in me through this nomination.

I am grateful to my family, friends, and colleagues. They have shown me kindness, challenged my thinking, and given me opportunities to advance and contribute first and foremost in public service, and importantly in the private sector and civil society.

I am honored to be considered for this position. I recognize the urgency and the dynamic nature of the critical responsibilities that fall under this office.

And I am driven by the mission of supporting the great women and men who are the Marines, Sailors, Civilians, and Families that are the Department of the Navy and who do the brave work of defending our nation.

I grew up in Florida.

I understood well and early the significance of the environment and our resources. They support how we live and where we operate. There is an interdependence there; we are part of an ecosystem.

That became very clear to me working for the State of Florida when the Deepwater Horizon oil spill occurred in 2010.

The Department of the Navy had the lead on the federal response; the five Gulf States felt the impacts.

This disaster caused us to think hard about the environmental, economic, national security, and safety implications of our energy choices.

We realized that singular reliance on certain resources and practices can be a vulnerability.

A decade later, the Colonial pipeline ransomware attack reinforces these considerations and heightens the urgency of information, cyber, and operational security.

Our energy resources and our environment are critical infrastructure for our national security – these things shape where and how the Navy and Marine Corps live, train, and operate. These things are critical to military readiness.

We face threats – both natural and manmade, a competitive energy market, and a changing climate that impacts installations and stresses operational readiness. It is imperative that we are cognizant operators in this ecosystem. We must focus on our resilience.

If confirmed, I am eager to bring my experience across sectors, curiosity, collaborative nature, and perspective to the job. And I will work hard to ensure that we continue to have the best Navy and Marine Corps the world has ever known.

Thank you for your time and consideration today, and I look forward to the conversation.