

**Statement of  
Sally Jewell  
Nominee for the Position of  
Secretary of the  
United States Department of the Interior  
Before the  
Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
United States Senate**

**March 7, 2013**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee.

Before we begin, I would like to thank my family, especially Warren, my husband of nearly 35 years, my two children, Peter and Anne, and my extended family for their love and support on this career journey.

As CEO of REI, I believe I have one of the greatest jobs in the land. It has been a true privilege to work alongside 11,000 colleagues at REI who share a commitment to inspiring, educating and outfitting people from all walks of life, urban and rural, to enjoy a lifetime of outdoor adventure and stewardship.

But there's no role that compares to serving my country. So it is with great honor that I appear before you as President Obama's nominee to be Secretary of the Interior.

And it is with deep humility that I acknowledge the scale of the duties entrusted to the office, from upholding our sacred trust responsibilities to American Indians and Alaska Natives, to supporting the unique needs of our Insular Areas, to making wise decisions about the use and conservation of the resources with which we have been blessed.

My earliest connection to America's public lands was through our National Parks. Growing up around Seattle, my parents would take our family camping and hiking to explore the Pacific Northwest – from Mt. Rainier to Olympic National Park to Crater Lake. I was hooked, and I've been enjoying the bounty of the outdoors ever since, sharing it with my children and anyone willing to join me on an adventure.

Our nation's parks, forests, deserts, rivers and seashores, coupled with the places that tell the stories of our diverse history, struggle, triumph and tragedy, are the crown jewels of our nation. It is through the wisdom of many congresses and presidents that we protect and celebrate these assets, recognizing their deep and enduring value.

I also appreciate that our public lands and Indian lands are huge economic engines for the nation. From energy development, to grazing, to logging, tourism and outdoor recreation, our lands and waters power our economy and create jobs.

Last year, the Department of the Interior disbursed over \$12 billion in revenue generated from energy production on public lands and offshore areas. Visitors to our National Parks generated an estimated \$30 billion in economic activity and supported over 250,000 jobs in 2011. And I know through my work at REI that Americans love the great outdoors. From hunting and hiking to angling, ORVing and bird watching, they spend \$646 billion on outdoor recreation annually, supporting 6.1 million direct jobs.

These are impressive numbers. They underscore the important balance that the Department of the Interior must maintain to ensure that our public lands and waters are managed wisely, using the best science available, to harness their economic potential while preserving their multiple-uses for future generations.

I am a mechanical engineer by degree and a petroleum engineer by training. I spent several years early in my career with Mobil Oil. Working in a field office in Oklahoma, I learned the industry from its source, working alongside my teammates, drilling and fracking new wells, and squeezing the last barrel of production out of some of our nation's oldest oil fields. In the exploration and production office in Denver, I was exposed to the diversity of our nation's oil and gas resources, from the challenges of the Arctic to the heavy oil in California. Since that time, new technologies and practices – both for conventional and renewable energy development – have enabled industry to harness resources more efficiently and better manage the associated environmental impacts.

With a desire to raise a family close to family, Warren and I moved back to Seattle where I joined a bank, first as an energy and natural resources expert, and later working with the diverse array of businesses that drive our nation's economy. Over my 19 years as a commercial banker, I had the privilege of working with Alaska Native Corporations and Indian tribes, oil companies and miners, real estate developers, farmers, ranchers, timber companies, fish processors, utilities manufacturers and many more. The broad exposure I had to many diverse businesses across the West gave me a deep appreciation for the creativity, entrepreneurship, and commitment of our nation's business people, not only to economic development, but also to their communities and our environment.

In 2000, I joined REI as Chief Operating Officer, becoming CEO in 2005. During my tenure at the company our hardworking employees nearly tripled the business to \$2 billion. In recent years, through energy conservation and the use of renewable sources of electricity, we have grown our business while actually reducing our carbon footprint.

But I am most proud of our commitment to giving back – organizing volunteer projects and supporting hundreds of community organizations that connect people, urban and rural, to the outdoors. My colleagues and I take great pride in REI's consistent ranking by FORTUNE Magazine as one of the 100 best places to work for in America.

Now, as I sit before you today, we face several challenges – and opportunities – that will shape our country for years to come.

On energy: I believe that with the help of rapidly advancing technologies, smart policies, and a commitment to an all-of-the-above strategy, we can continue to expand and diversify our energy production, cut our reliance on foreign oil, and protect our land and water.

Innovative technologies and new frontiers both onshore and offshore are increasing our nation's domestic oil and gas production, and we owe it to the American people to make sure that development takes place in a safe and responsible way. We also need to provide industry with certainty and clarity when it comes to development, so that they can make smart investments to help power our economy.

I know that the President has set a goal to double renewable electricity generation again by the year 2020. Interior has a critical role to play in fulfilling the President's vision through encouraging renewable energy on our nation's public lands. As part of the President's energy team, I will work to make sure that we're doing that in the right way and in the right places.

When it comes to conservation, we are making important progress on preserving our lands, waters and wildlife that define us as a people and make it America the beautiful.

But we also have a generation of children growing up without any connection to nature. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, today's American children spend an average of 53 hours a week in front of a screen. Other sources estimate that children spend less than 30 minutes a week in unstructured outside play. If confirmed, I will redouble efforts to ensure that our open spaces, trails and parks are accessible and relevant to all people from all backgrounds. With the Centennial of the National Park System approaching in 2016, we have an opportunity to use the visibility of this milestone to celebrate all open spaces. From neighborhood parks to the vast lands of the BLM, the Department of the Interior is well positioned to build a deep and enduring connection to a new generation of Americans and visitors.

If confirmed, one of my top priorities will be to build upon the historic strides made by this Administration in upholding our sacred trust responsibilities to the Native American and Alaska Native communities. President Obama has helped to restore a nation-to-nation relationship with Indian Country – one rooted in consultation with tribal communities – and I pledge to continue this forward progress.

The President has made clear that climate change is an important issue for our nation, especially as we face more frequent and intense droughts, wildfires and floods. I commit to tapping into the vast scientific and land management resources at Interior – from USGS to the Fish and Wildlife Service to the Bureau of Reclamation and beyond – to better understand and prepare for the challenges that our cities, coastlines, river basins and – ultimately – our economies face.

Good government means ensuring that the Department is built to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – not just for this President, but for the next and the next. It means finding efficiencies and thinking sustainably. It means hiring a diverse and dedicated workforce. And it means, above all, being accountable to the American public.

At REI, I ran a business rooted in transparency and integrity. If confirmed as Secretary of the Interior, I pledge to abide by those same principles and to work with this Committee, Congress and stakeholders to implement commonsense solutions to these complex challenges.

I humbly submit that I'm ready to take up the challenge.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, distinguished members of the Committee. I look forward to taking your questions.