Statement of

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Nominee to be
Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy
U.S. Department of Energy

Before the
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
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Good morning Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members and staff of the Committee. It is my honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy at the United States Department of Energy.
I would like to begin my statement by expressing my gratitude to President Trump and Secretary Rick Perry for this nomination. I am humbled by the confidence that they have placed in me with this nomination.

I have had the honor of collaborating with numerous talented individuals throughout my career as a materials engineer and a leader in the nuclear industry. There are many colleagues, friends and family members whose mentorship and faith in my abilities have contributed to my career path to make my sitting before you today possible.

I want to especially thank and recognize my husband Peter for his relentless support and understanding. He is here today with our children Sanjay and Amiya, who are missing school for this real-life civics lesson. Madam Chairman with your approval, I'd like to introduce Sanjay and Amiya, as well as Peter to the committee. I would also like to thank my sister Seema, who has always been my cheerleader in my pursuit of a career in an industry that hasn't been typical for women or Indian-Americans. Lastly, I wouldn't be here without the support and love of my parents, Krishna and Arti, who immigrated to America before I was born. They raised me to appreciate diverse cultures and to be diligent and inquisitive. They taught me, when faced with an issue, to focus on the "what and why?" first, and then to worry about the "how?" That lesson has served me very well throughout my life.

Chairman Murkowski and Members of the Committee, as I seek your approval for appointment to this office, I would like to share a few thoughts about my background and experiences that I believe qualify me for this position. I graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with a degree in Materials Science and Engineering. Upon winning a National Science Physical Science Consortium Fellowship, I went on to University of Michigan to earn my Master's and Doctorate in the same discipline. There, I developed nanopowders, before "nano" was even a buzzword. My first job after graduate school was my introduction to the nuclear industry. I leveraged my thesis work to develop advanced nuclear fuel for the U.S. Navy's nuclear fleet while working at Bettis Atomic Power Laboratory. During this time, I had the good fortune of visiting Newport News Shipyard while the USS Ronald Reagan was being constructed. As I stood in the cavity of the reactor compartment, looking several stories up, the impact of my work overwhelmed me. I realized that the material that I was researching could

soon be used to propel an aircraft carrier like this. That moment was pivotal to my career; it was then that I truly appreciated the magnitude of the energy density that nuclear power provides and the role it plays enhancing U.S. national security. While nuclear energy reliably produces nearly 20 percent of our electricity, and is a clean, secure baseload source, it also powers ships and submarines to defend U.S. interests around the world.

I have spent more than 20 years in the nuclear industry, including nearly a decade at Westinghouse in the Nuclear Fuel division, leading numerous R&D programs and fostering relationships with dozens of utility customers. That experience led me to my current role as director of GAIN, the Gateway for Accelerated Innovation in Nuclear, a DOE initiative. In this role, I created private-public partnerships to help advanced nuclear technology developers commercialize their technologies faster and more cost-effectively by leveraging the capabilities in the U.S. National Laboratory complex. Since 2016, GAIN has positively impacted 112 companies.

Advanced nuclear energy technologies provide an opportunity for the U.S. to meet future electricity demands while benefiting our economy, environment, and national security. The United States invented nuclear energy technologies for peaceful uses, and we are the world's largest producer, accounting for more than 30 percent of worldwide generation of nuclear electricity. The U.S. remains in a position of strength, but the future is not guaranteed. Thanks to my experiences, I also have a deep appreciation of the challenges and the needs of this sector.

Today, America is in the midst of a period of incredible energy progress, and the nuclear energy sector enjoys bipartisan support as demonstrated by the recently enacted Nuclear Energy Innovation Capabilities Act (NEICA). Should I be confirmed, I will draw upon my previous public and private sector experience in the nuclear energy industry to execute the Office's mission of advancing nuclear power to meet the nation's energy, environmental, and national security needs.

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Cantwell, Members of the Committee, thank you again for this opportunity to appear before you as the President's nominee to be Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy at the Department of Energy. I commit to working with the Committee and to be responsive to requests to testify, meet with Committee Members, and share information. Thank you for your time today. I look forward to answering your questions as you consider my nomination.