

**Statement of Lanny E. Erdos**  
**Nominee for the Position of Director**  
**Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement**  
**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources**  
**United States Senate**

**December 17, 2019**

Chairman Murkowski, Ranking Member Manchin, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for the position of Director of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE.) I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary Bernhardt for their confidence in me. I am excited to be here today to share with you my vision for the OSMRE.

I appreciate the opportunity to share with you my background, give you an idea about where I come from, and provide insight into my professional career at the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (Ohio DNR).

If I am honored enough to be confirmed, my 31-years of experience and public service at the Ohio DNR has uniquely prepared me for the position of Director of OSMRE. I have working knowledge and specific experience in almost every aspect of OSMRE's mission.

I began my career as an environmental technician, primarily responsible for collecting field data and reviewing mine maps for accuracy. I was soon promoted to Reclamation Inspector, where for seven years I was responsible for inspections associated with coal and industrial mineral mining. My responsibilities included ensuring that the coal operator was following the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 (SMCRA), and inspection of mining operations and reclamation activities.

I later transferred to the abandoned mine land program (or AML) as a design specialist. Working under the supervision of a registered professional engineer, I designed AML remediation projects, such as highwall backfills, surface subsidence caused by pre-law underground mining, coal refuse reclamation projects, and stream restoration to name a few.

I have also been a Permitting Manager where my responsibilities included oversight of all coal and industrial mineral mining applications.

In 2008 I was promoted to Deputy Chief responsible for managing the State's coal, industrial minerals and mine safety programs. My responsibilities included statewide management of nearly a 1000 permits, and the protection, training and certification of the State's mining workforce.

Three years later I was promoted to Chief of the Ohio DNR. I maintained my Deputy Chief responsibilities and also assumed management of the AML program. As Chief, I worked with federal partners, such as the US Environmental Protection Agency, the Office of Surface Mining, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the Mine Safety and Health Administration, as well as state and local partners such as state Fish and Wildlife, Dam Safety, Forestry and Engineering; and higher education partners such as Ohio University and The Ohio State University.

I also worked with local watershed groups. At the Ohio DNR we funded numerous watershed coordinator positions throughout the eastern portion of the State. In connection with our Ohio Rural Action partnership we supported AmeriCorps positions to assist with stream restoration projections and stream data collection.

From a personal perspective, I come from a very strong-willed blue-collar background where family comes first. From a very young age, my mother and father instilled into my brother, sister and me the lesson that hard work is important, that it matters. They led by example and taught us this lesson through their own hard work. My father worked for nearly 30 years in an underground coal mine, and it gives me great pride to tell you today that I am the son of an American coal miner. Although it was an incredibly difficult job, he enjoyed it as well as the life it provided his family. He worked rotating shifts, but somehow he always managed to make it to my many sporting events, and there many, as I thought I had to play every sport imaginable, as did my brother. My sister's band and scholastic events were just as important to him.

My mother worked as a cook at the local school, and later in the county court system for one of the local judges. Like my father, she always managed to make it to the kids' events, and still managed to have supper ready back in the days when

families sat together around the table for every meal. They both worked hard to support our family, and seeing that day after day stuck with me.

I have tremendous respect for the men and women who mine the coal that helps to supply the country's energy needs, like my son-in-law who still, today, works as an underground long-wall miner operator in Pennsylvania. But I also understand the need to protect our lands and water. Striking that environmental balance, as I have tried to do for more than 30-years, ensures the protection of our natural resources and supports the country's energy needs.

If confirmed, it would be an honor to serve the citizens of this great country, President Trump and Secretary Bernhardt as Director of the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement. Thank you for today's opportunity. I look forward to answering your questions.