

Prepared Statement of Charles D. McConnell
Nominee
Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy
United States Department of Energy
Before the
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate

July 28, 2011

Chairman Bingaman, Ranking Member Murkowski, and distinguished members of the committee, it is a great honor and a privilege to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy.

I thank Secretary Chu and President Obama for their support and confidence in recommending and nominating me. I also thank the Committee for considering my nomination.

I am currently the Chief Operating Officer in the Office of Fossil Energy, where I manage the daily operations of the Office's programs and leadership, including strategic planning, program direction, and evaluation. I also oversee Fossil Energy's administrative and budgetary operations.

I was born and raised in the small steel town of Steubenville, Ohio. My mother was a school teacher and my father worked in a steel mill for 37 years. I have always had a curiosity and appreciation for industry and spent two summers working in a steel mill and a power plant while pursuing a degree in Chemical Engineering at Carnegie Mellon University. I later earned an MBA at Cleveland State University.

My entire career has been focused on a broad range of industries and energy development. My first job after college was as a plant engineer and manager for Union Carbide at facilities in Ohio, Pittsburgh and on the East Coast. Eventually, I was detailed to a joint venture between Union Carbide and Texaco that focused on gasification and hydrocarbon conversion.

Union Carbide later became Praxair, and I spent nearly 32 years there. I was fortunate to have held various positions in the U.S. and Asia, including a three-year stint in Singapore as Managing Director for Asian Markets. I ended my career at Praxair in Houston, Texas, as

Global Vice President. In that position, I provided leadership on research and development initiatives in oxy-coal technologies, hydrogen, refining and chemicals, enhanced oil recovery, as well as, carbon management science for carbon dioxide capture and sequestration.

After retiring from Praxair in 2009, I served for two years as Vice President of Carbon Management at Battelle Energy Technology in Columbus, Ohio, where I was responsible for business and technology management, including leadership of the Midwest Regional Carbon Sequestration Partnership.

During my career in the private sector, I held a number of advisory positions, including chairmanships of the Gasification Technologies Council and the Clean Coal Technology Foundation of Texas. I also served on the FutureGen Advisory Board; the Gulf Coast Carbon Center; T&P Syngas Company; Pittsburgh Coal Conference; and the Coal Utilization Research Council.

I believe my technical and business background and knowledge of energy markets, as well as my management and leadership skills, have provided me with the experience and expertise necessary to lead the Office of Fossil Energy. And, if I am confirmed, I look forward to applying my full energy and commitment to addressing one of our Nation's most critical challenges: to ensure the competitive, sustainable and environmentally responsible use of our Nation's vast fossil energy resources.

Mr. Chairman, and members of the committee, I thank you again for considering my nomination and I pledge that, if confirmed as Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy, I will work closely with you and others in the Congress as we pursue the common goal of securing America's energy future. Thank you, and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.