

**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**

Chairman Lee, Ranking Member Heinrich, 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 (OSM). I would like to thank President Trump and Secretary Burgum for their confidence in me. I am excited to be here today to share with you my vision for OSM.

I appreciate the opportunity today to provide insight into my background, give you an idea about where I come from, and provide a snapshot into my professional career in the public and private sectors.

If confirmed, my nearly 35 years of experience in public service at the Department of the Interior and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (Ohio DNR) has prepared me well for the position of Director of OSM. Additionally, my recent time spent in the private sector as an Environmental and Reclamation manager has given me a unique 360-degree perspective of the challenges facing the coal industry.

As a former Director at OSM, I have working knowledge and specific experience in every aspect of OSM's mission, and as a former Chief at the Ohio DNR where I represented Ohio on the Interstate Mining Compact Commission (IMCC) for more than a decade, I developed both state and federal relationships across the country that have proven beneficial throughout my career.

*The IMCC is a multi-state governmental organization supporting the states related to environmental protection and the mine safety interests of its member states.*

Most recently, I have worked in the mining industry as President/Vice President (VP) for two reclamation companies and VP for environmental compliance for all the associated companies. I am responsible for reclamation and remediation of mining permits in Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia and Alabama.

At Cardinal Reclamation (one of the reclamation companies that I manage), we have made significant reclamation and remediation progress over the past five years. In Kentucky, Cardinal stepped up to the plate to assist the people of the Commonwealth when permits, affected by another permittee, were not properly reclaimed. Today, many of those permits (60+) have been fully reclaimed and returned to a productive post-mining landuse.

*Here are just a few of the accomplishments of Cardinal Reclamation in Kentucky:*

- *Reduced the number of permits from 106 to 41 by achieving final reclamation*
- *Eliminated over 40,000 linear feet of highwall.*
- *Planted more than a half-million trees.*
- *Remediated/corrected six long-term water treatment sites.*
- *Corrected and brought into compliance 135 outstanding Notices of Violations (NOVs) and 114 Cessation Orders (CO) associated prior ownership of the permits.*
- *Invested over \$55 million dollars in reclamation and remediation associated with the previous ownership of the permits.*

As a former Director at OSM, we made important in-roads in improving relationships with the states, the tribes (where OSM is the primary regulator) and the mining industry. Those relationships were strained under the previous administration. I will work to establish a collaborative and mutually beneficial relationship that recognizes the important role that the states play relative to regulation within their borders and just as importantly recognizes the importance of the energy that is provided by our coal industry.

At the Ohio DNR, I began my career as an environmental technician. 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 was also a Permitting Manager where my responsibilities included oversight of all coal and industrial mineral mining applications. Later, 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 1000 permits, and the protection, training and certification of the State's mining workforce. Three years later, I was promoted to Chief. I maintained my Deputy Chief responsibilities and 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, just to name a few.

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 in my brother, sister and me the lesson that hard work is important. 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. Although it was an incredibly difficult job, he enjoyed it, as well as the life it provided his family. My mother worked as a cook at the local school and later worked in the county court system. They both worked hard to support their family and seeing that day after day stuck with me. My wife Rhonda and I have tried to instill much of the same in our children, Courtney and Jordan.

I have tremendous respect for the men and women who mine the coal that helps to supply the country's energy needs. An energy need that will only continue to grow in the coming years. But I also understand the need to protect our land and water. Striking that environmental balance, as I have tried to do throughout my career, ensures the protection of our natural resources while also recognizing the ever-increasing energy consumption of the country.

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