

Statement of Dr. Andrea Travnicek
Nominee for the Position of Assistant Secretary for Water and Science
at the Department of the Interior
Before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate
April 30, 2025

Good morning Chairman Lee, Ranking Member Heinrich, and the Members of the Committee. I am both humbled and honored to be nominated by President Trump to serve the American people as Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the Department of the Interior. Furthermore, I am grateful for the support and trust of Secretary Burgum.

I would like to begin by recognizing and thanking my parents Pat and Jean, and my sister Heather, who traveled from North Dakota to be here today, while my grandma, Norma, and my nephews, Ethan and Logan, are cheering me on back home. I would also like to thank my friends, colleagues, teammates and the Bison family, some of whom are here today, for their continued guidance and support.

I grew up in a military family moving about every three years through high school with roots grounded in northern Minnesota and North Dakota. My roots are further tied to an Interior site actually - Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge located in Minnesota - where my parents met. Who knew we would all end up here today when mom asked dad to go for a walk along the lake.

Both of my parents set the example early on of the importance of serving others - through my dad's 44-year military service career to the country, 28 years of those active duty, and through my mom's service temperament in her own business, work as a travel agent, and as a military spouse. Core values of dedication, integrity, and respect for others were ingrained at a young age.

Our parents also raised us to have great respect for the natural world. We visited National Parks and National Wildlife Refuges across the country between moves and spent summers back at the lake and farm in Minnesota. These treasured experiences; hunting, fishing, camping, and spending countless hours outdoors on the water, set a foundation for my passion for natural resources. Spending time in the field or kayaking are still my favorite places to be.

I am a proud graduate of North Dakota State University three times over. My master's research was located in the badlands of Theodore Roosevelt National Park where I conducted a land management study to reduce an invasive plant species in the park. My

PhD research focused on stakeholder perspectives and network relationships as they related to lake management decisions in Minnesota.

For over 20 years, my professional career has been connected to the management of natural resources in the private, public and non-profit sectors. Through research, grassroots efforts, and working directly with landowners, project sponsors, and industries, I have been able to quickly provide assessments, identify opportunities, and provide solutions to meet management objectives across competing frameworks.

My work with the Army Corps in the Sacramento District provided a backdrop to an understanding of the complexities associated with the management of water in California. Participating firsthand in federal and state regulatory processes revealed inefficiencies in the bureaucratic system and set my public service mission – to achieve management decisions through accountable timely responses, process improvements, and collaborative and common-sense approaches.

In 2011, record flooding took place across the State of North Dakota impacting major communities along several rivers. As the senior policy advisor to the Governor, I worked with various international, federal, state, local agencies and Tribal Nations to quickly identify changing conditions and determine needs. During this time, my parents' house was flooded waist high, and my sister's house was flooded to the rooftop. This experience impressed upon me, both professionally and personally, the importance of real-time data, timely collaborative operations, and long-term management solutions not only within a specific community or state, but throughout a shared watershed.

While serving in various leadership roles at the Department of the Interior during the first Trump Administration, I was fortunate to work on several Administration priorities, including those related to water and science initiatives. At the state level, I led the Department of Parks and Recreation and during my tenure as the first Director of the Department of Water Resources, federally recognized Tribal Nations were added as partners for North Dakota cost-sharing for water projects; over \$1.5 billion of state commitments were provided to cost share partners to build both water supply and flood protection projects; and access to affordable, and reliable water supply through two state-owned regional projects was expanded.

As we look across the west today, maintaining critical water infrastructure and managing water resources is crucial. Thoughtful, collaborative approaches will be important to meet management objectives for water users. And further identifying and mapping our Nation's own mineral assets and energy assets through the U.S. Geological Survey's capabilities will

assist in fulfilling President Trump's priorities related to increasing American mineral production and unleashing American energy.

If confirmed as the Assistant Secretary for Water and Science, I will bring my core values and natural resources and management experiences to the role. I look forward to leading and working again with the dedicated teams of engineers, hydrologists and scientists at the Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Geological Survey to implement the bureaus' core missions.

I commit to working in cooperation with you and with the American people as decisions are made, and to implement the President and the Secretary's priorities to increase accountability and responsiveness; implement innovation over regulation; and manage America's resources for American prosperity and national security.

Thank you for meeting with me earlier this week and for having me here today. I look forward to answering any questions.