

**Todd Kim Opening Statement**  
**Confirmation Hearing**  
**Senate Judiciary Committee**  
**April 14, 2021**

Good morning, Chairman Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley, members of the Committee.

I am honored to appear before you today for this hearing to consider my nomination to be the Assistant Attorney General for the Environment and Natural Resources Division at the Department of Justice.

Thank you, Senator Booker, for your generous introduction. I thank President Biden and Attorney General Garland for the opportunity to return to the Department where I began my legal career.

And most of all, let me thank my family. My wife Carolyn and my sons Palden and Jigme are here with me today. Watching from afar are my sister Sonna and my parents, Chang Jung Kim and Sookhi Yu. I am incredibly grateful and incredibly lucky to have all of them in my life.

In the 1960s, my parents were Korean immigrants who came to the United States to pursue graduate degrees. They both chose Big 10 schools: my mom the University of Minnesota, and my dad Purdue. They met here, settled here, had my big sister in Indiana and then me in New Jersey, and eventually became proud U.S. citizens. Their hard work and fundamental decency have been at the root of any success I've ever had and will always be a model for what I'd like to show my own children.

In 1984, my parents took the family on a classic RV trip to the American West. I was 11 years old, and the trip made a big impact on me. The grandeur and beauty of Yellowstone, Grand Teton, Arches, Mesa Verde--every park visit testified to the need to preserve our Nation's treasures for future generations.

As I grew older, I learned more about the rule of law and the role of the government in promoting the public good. And I learned more about how the pollution laws are supposed to protect the health and welfare of all of us, including every community in America. I grew to realize that my calling was public service to protect our shared interest in the environment and our natural resources, and the best way for me to contribute to that effort was as a lawyer, making sure the country's environmental laws are followed and enforced.

After graduating from law school and clerking for the Honorable Judith Rogers of the D.C. Circuit, I applied to join the Department of Justice through its Honors Program and asked to be assigned to the Environment and Natural Resources Division. I grew up as a lawyer at ENRD, working on cases involving the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, Superfund site cleanup, Native American land rights, the establishment of national monuments, and more. I worked on cases across the country, in the Supreme Court and every federal circuit--civil and criminal enforcement matters against corporations and individuals, as well as defenses of agency actions against challenges of all sorts.

In my seven-and-a-half years there, I also learned firsthand the skill, dedication, professionalism, and integrity of the career staff that work day in and day out enforcing environmental laws for the good of the American people.

I loved my job, and frankly, I thought I would never leave the Division, but I was unexpectedly offered another opportunity to do public service. This time it was the chance to serve as the first Solicitor General for my adopted home, the District of Columbia. As Solicitor General, I would be the chief appellate lawyer representing the people of the District. I couldn't turn it down. I am, at heart, a government lawyer, and it was an honor and a privilege to serve my community for more than 11 years. But I always hoped I'd have the chance to come back someday to the Department of Justice, and to ENRD.

I am so thankful for that opportunity today. I know that this is a crucial moment for the Division and the Nation, with the pressing imperatives of enforcing the Nation's environmental laws with integrity; defending federal agencies; honoring the United States's important relationship with Native American Indian Tribes; promoting the effective stewardship of public lands and natural resources; and addressing climate change and environmental justice.

The cliché for me is real: I want to leave the world, and the country, a better place for my kids. I am deeply honored to have a chance to do that, and I look forward to your questions.

Thank you.