

**Opening Statement for the Record of Dr. Kelvin K. Droegemeier  
Office of Science and Technology Policy Director Nominee  
U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation  
Thursday, August 23, 2018**

Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, and Members of the Committee: I am truly honored beyond words to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee as Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). I am pleased my wife of 35 years, Lisa, could join me, along with several wonderful friends and supporters who bless my life daily.

I was born in Kansas and at age 19 I witnessed my first tornado up close and personal in the Texas panhandle. The power and majesty of that incredible natural force fueled my interest in meteorology, the focus of my undergraduate studies at the University of Oklahoma, OU. I earned M.S. and doctorate degrees in atmospheric science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

I returned to OU to begin my career as a researcher and educator. My work has focused on using data to improve forecasts, giving people more time to find shelter when threatened by extremely violent and

previously unpredictable storms. I later started a weather technology company based on that work.

I am a scientist, I am a storm chaser, and I am an educator. As many of you may know, I have a fair bit of experience in science policy, too, having been twice nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate to the National Science Board, under Presidents George W. Bush, and Barack Obama. In addition to having served as Vice President for Research at OU, I also serve as Oklahoma's Secretary of Science and Technology in the Cabinet of Governor Mary Fallin.

“We live in a time of extraordinary possibilities. The pace of discovery is accelerating, and the global science and engineering ecosystem is rife with both competition and opportunities for cooperation.” I was privileged to speak those two sentences to this Committee two years ago in testimony about the wonderfully bipartisan American Innovation and Competitiveness Act (AICA.)

Today I appear before you again, but with an even greater privilege and responsibility – to discuss the possibility of serving as OSTP

Director. I would be honored to take on the challenge of ensuring continued American leadership in science and technology, which for decades has contributed to our success and prosperity. What I love most about OSTP is that it measures its success not by what it does, but rather by the extent to which America succeeds because of it.

Our Nation today faces great challenges. Yet no challenge is beyond our reach, and science and technology are time tested and powerful pathways towards solutions.

If confirmed, I will work closely with this Committee, other members of Congress, my colleagues throughout the Federal government as well as in academia and industry, to ensure robust American leadership across the science and technology enterprise. A few areas of particular focus include:

- A coordinated and comprehensive portfolio of Federal science and technology initiatives across the whole of government. This covers everything from fundamental research that is commercially risky

but potentially transformative, to applied R&D further downstream.

- Second, an education framework to produce a capable and diverse workforce essential to America's future, covering K-12 schools, career techs, two- and four-year colleges, and America's pre-eminent research universities.
- Finally, initiatives and new models of public-academic-private partnerships that move scientific research outcomes out of the lab and into the economy more quickly and efficiently.

There are an increasing number of threats to S&T in America.

Unnecessary regulatory burdens stifle our best and brightest researchers, It is clear international competition is rising rapidly, especially from China. China has the wealth and expressed desire to challenge our longstanding leadership. We must recognize that challenge but we must also embrace the value of collaboration. Global research is not a zero-sum game, and all progress is valuable. But American leadership ensures

that American values remain at the forefront of technological development.

We are in a time of unprecedented opportunity. The tools, technologies, and research capabilities of the United States remain unmatched in the world. Our scientists and engineers enjoy unprecedented freedom to explore the boundaries of what's possible.

But we must not simply be comfortable to maintain. We must accelerate our progress through more effective planning, strategic investments, and by eliminating barriers that unnecessarily hinder us without sacrificing our fundamental freedoms. If I am confirmed as OSTP Director, I pledge to work with all of you to help safeguard America's national and economic security for generations to come.

Thank you very much.