

**Statement of
Christopher Smith**

**Nominee to be
Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy
U.S. Department of Energy**

**Before the
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
United States Senate**

November 14, 2013

Chairman Wyden, Ranking Member Murkowski, members of the Committee: I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy at the United States Department of Energy.

I would like to begin my statement by expressing my gratitude to the President for the confidence in me that he has demonstrated in this nomination. I am honored, and – should I be confirmed – I will do my best to meet that confidence.

I would also like to thank Secretary Moniz for his support and for his leadership of the Department of Energy.

I also thank my wife, Patricia, and my children, Andrew and Amanda. Their support and encouragement make it possible for me to spend the long hours and do the hard work required to serve the American people.

And finally, Mr. Chairman, I want to recognize my parents, Mr. Raymond Clyde Smith Jr, originally of Anderson, Texas, and Mrs. Sue Ann Smith, originally of Belton Texas, who both are here this morning. I am sitting here today because of their example and support throughout my life.

Mr. Chairman, growing up in Fort Worth, Texas, the son of a veteran, I was taught early on the importance of duty and service to my country. That commitment to service and duty led me to seek an appointment to the United States Military Academy at West Point, where I studied engineering management and mechanical

engineering. Upon graduating from West Point, I had the privilege of serving as an Army combat engineer in the 2nd Infantry Division and the 25th Infantry Division.

I began my post-military career in finance, holding positions with Citibank and J.P. Morgan in New York City and London. Working in England afforded me the opportunity to study at Cambridge University, where I received a Master of Business Administration degree. Subsequently, I accepted a position with Texaco (which was later acquired by Chevron), where I was engaged in business development and natural gas marketing. During this time, I worked for three years in Latin America, where I initiated negotiations on the first-ever gas pipeline between Colombia and Venezuela.

In 2009, after 11 years in the oil and gas industry, I was asked to serve as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oil and Natural Gas in the Department of Energy's Office of Fossil Energy. In this position, I was responsible for administering domestic and international oil and gas programs, including research and development, policy analysis, and liquefied natural gas import and export licensing.

This has been an eventful period with respect to domestic oil and gas development. In 2010, when the Deepwater Horizon oil spill occurred off the coast of Louisiana in the Gulf of Mexico, I was appointed as the Designated Federal Official for the commission that President Obama established to investigate the root causes of the spill. In addition, I led the multi-agency effort to coordinate research on the sustainable development of shale gas and tight oil resources.

In February of this year, I was named Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Fossil Energy. Since then, I have also served as acting Assistant Secretary, managing the Office of Fossil Energy's programs and day-to-day operations.

Mr. Chairman, we live in an exciting time. The development of our nation's energy resources is reaping benefits that were not imagined a few short years ago. We have before us an opportunity to invest, to innovate, to create jobs and support energy security, all the while addressing climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Accomplishing this will require us to harness all of our sources of domestic energy. The Office of Fossil Energy has played – and will continue to play – an important role in meeting that challenge.

I believe my background, experience and commitment have prepared me to lead the Office of Fossil Energy during this particularly critical time, and I welcome the opportunity to continue my service to the nation as Assistant Secretary. If confirmed I pledge to work closely with this committee and others in the Congress to ensure that our nation's abundant energy resources are developed in a way that is sustainable and that will strengthen our economy.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to answering any questions you and the committee may have.