

Statement of Wesley Brooks
Nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for the
Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
February 12, 2026

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of this committee, I'm honored to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you and your staff.

I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to serve our nation with the trust and confidence of the President and Secretary Rubio. I'm also grateful to so many wonderful family members, friends, and colleagues.

I'm honored to be joined here today by a few of the most important people in my life. My amazing wife of more than thirteen years, Megan, to whom I owe more than I can ever repay, including sharing with me the two greatest blessings in my life, our daughter Evie, and our son Ford. My Mom is a living testament to the blessings of liberty and the American Dream, having fled Castro's Cuba as a child and working to provide me with a foundation in life unburdened by that history. My Dad and stepmom demonstrated for me day in and day out what lives of honor and service looked like throughout their long careers in law enforcement. Thank you all for your love and ongoing support.

After earning a Ph.D. in ecological science, I had the privilege to advise three members of the Florida congressional delegation on agriculture, energy, environment, trade, and water resources issues – Former House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chair Brian Mast, and then-Senator Marco Rubio. I continue to deeply admire each of them to this day.

In 2020, I joined the State of Florida's federal affairs office and was later appointed as Florida's Chief Resilience Officer by Governor DeSantis, working across state agencies and local governments to address flood risks and adapt infrastructure to reduce the risks and economic impacts of flooding and hurricanes on communities and businesses across the state.

Most recently I've enjoyed serving under Administrator Zeldin and Assistant Administrator Kramer as Deputy Assistant Administrator for Regulatory and Scientific Affairs in EPA's Office of Water.

If confirmed, I will leverage my extensive experience cultivating and sustaining relationships and successfully coordinating across diverse entities to achieve mutually beneficial cooperation that delivers results.

The Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) was created by Congress in 1973 and given responsibility for "matters relating to oceans, environmental, scientific, fisheries, wildlife, and conservation affairs...." Today, OES is at the forefront of

returning us to common-sense environmental policy that puts America, and American workers, first.

Under President Trump's leadership, OES protects our national security and economic interests in areas beyond national borders, including the high seas, the Arctic and Antarctica, and outer space. OES also has a key role in combatting transnational threats, like illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, transboundary pollution in our air and water, and illegal logging and mining.

Maintaining U.S. leadership and robust diplomacy is critical for the stability and security of the U.S. economy and for countering the Chinese Communist Party's global ambitions.

If confirmed I commit to driving OES diplomacy on the Administration's priorities, including:

Access to rare earths and critical minerals. OES leadership in deep seabed mining and the recycling and recovery pillar of the Administration's bilateral Critical Mineral Frameworks support the Department's broader Pax Silica initiative and directly benefits U.S. supply chain security and resilience.

American Space Superiority. Energetic commercial diplomacy on behalf of the American space industry and the promotion of U.S. space capabilities, systems, and services is imperative as we advance and innovate the space technologies ordinary Americans have come to rely on in their daily lives and seek to maintain the U.S. edge in space as China works to beat NASA back to the Moon.

Productive Oceans. Coordinated action with like-minded nations is needed to combat IUU fishing, including by China's distant water fishing fleet, that threatens global fisheries, maritime security, the \$500 billion U.S. seafood industry, and more than 2.5 million American jobs.

Water Security. By supporting regional bureaus and U.S. Ambassadors, OES can help stabilize water supplies to safeguard industrial supply chains, create U.S. market opportunities, reduce migration, and prevent conflicts and war.

OES must also defend against global regulatory approaches that stifle innovation and disadvantage U.S. companies. This includes continuing pressure to oppose aspects of the EU Space Act, and supporting a pragmatic agreement to reduce plastic pollution, that draws on innovation as a solution and promotes U.S. jobs and investment.

At its core, the United States is a frontier nation – American ingenuity and optimism have fueled our rise as a global power and our national interests in the oceans, outer space, and the ever-deepening interface between biology and technology.

If confirmed, I will do everything in my power to ensure that OES is at the leading edge of U.S. efforts to explore, exploit, and defend all these vital frontiers under its charge so that the 21st Century remains an American Century.

Thank you for considering my nomination.