

**Opening Statement of David L. Cohen
Nominee for United States Ambassador to Canada
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
September 22, 2021**

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and Members of the Committee:

I am proud and humbled to appear before you today as President Biden's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to Canada. I want to thank the President for his nomination -- Senators Casey and Toomey, two extraordinary public servants who I have had the privilege of working closely with over many years -- for their kind introductions of me -- and this committee for its courtesy.

I also would like to acknowledge my wife, Rhonda Cohen, who has joined us here today. She has supported me -- maybe it would be more accurate to say that she has put up with me -- through 44 years of marriage. I can say with absolute certainty that I simply would not be here today were it not for her remarkable partnership and commitment to my career.

Canada is one of our most important and committed allies and a partner for our economic prosperity and our national security. But I understand the significant challenges that lie ahead for both of our countries. If confirmed, I pledge to devote my full efforts to strengthening our unique bilateral partnership, to enable both countries to take advantage of our shared economic and political interests.

As President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau stated in their *Roadmap for a Renewed U.S. Canada Partnership* in February of this year, "It is in the shared interest of the United States and Canada to revitalize and expand our historic alliance and steadfast friendship to overcome the daunting challenges of today and realize the full potential of the relationship into the future."

In navigating the nomination and confirmation process, including meetings with members of this Committee, I have heard many recommendations for expanding and improving the already strong relationship between Canada and the United States. Based on these discussions, if confirmed, some key priorities for me are:

- Preserving and growing the trade relationship between Canada and the United States, including as detailed in the USMCA. At nearly \$1.7 billion a day, Canada is our largest trading partner and the top export market for more than 30 of our states.
- Easing border restrictions while protecting public health in both countries. As Canada and the United States share the world's longest land border, extending 5,525 miles, with 120 ports of entry, and a pre-pandemic daily rate

of 400,000 people crossing over, a safe and vibrant border is important for bilateral relations, trade, tourism, and the personal and family relationships that form the bedrock of our cultures. I understand the impact of today's restrictions on the many communities along the border, but also appreciate the health sensitivities and concerns that have led to the current regulations.

- Canada and the United States cooperatively manage multiple watersheds through complex arrangements, several of which would benefit from modernization. A modernized Columbia River Treaty regime, for example, could enhance hydropower, flood risk management, and ecosystems in the United States and Canada. I know that many Members share this high priority.
- Continue to respect and fortify the trusted and valuable alliance with Canada on multiple defense and foreign affairs relationships, including NATO and NORAD. We also must honor our commitments to make the necessary investments to meet current and future challenges to our collective security and preserve our ability to successfully promote peace and human rights globally.
- Continue to advance common priorities of Canada and the United States on the global stage on issues such as combating climate change, anti-corruption, energy independence, and building more diverse and inclusive societies, including for women and girls around the world.

My varied professional career has included the practice of law, government service, and a senior executive business role. That career has been rewarding, enriching, and ultimately enhanced by leadership roles in multiple nonprofit organizations. For me, one important theme running through my career has been the opportunities I have had to *serve*. I am proud of my success in tackling big, complicated issues, and in bringing people together to solve problems.

I am excited by the possibility of extending my passion for service and applying my collaborative and solutions-based approach in the role of United States Ambassador to Canada. If confirmed, I look forward to consulting with the members of this Committee as I represent the President, the Secretary of State, and this country in Canada. It would be the ultimate honor to work alongside the 1,200 members of the U.S. Mission in Canada for our government and with the Canadian government to advance our shared priorities.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to your questions.