

Mike Boren Opening Statement
Nominee for Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment
Before the U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
May 21, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Boozman, Ranking Member Klobuchar and members of the committee. It is an honor to appear before you today. I have enjoyed meeting some of you and your staff in your offices.

If confirmed, it will be a privilege to work with the members of this committee as you provide oversight and guidance to the Department of Agriculture and the United States Forest Service.

I am thankful to President Donald Trump and Secretary Brooke Rollins for the trust they have placed in me. Secretary Rollins is an inspiring leader and I hope you will give me the opportunity to work for her.

May I introduce my wife and partner of 41 years? Meeting Joan Atchley at a church dance changed my life. Made it harder. Made it more worthwhile. Almost every achievement of my subsequent life comes from trying to make her approve of me. Life with Joan is a great adventure. We often look at each other at the end of a day and say, truthfully, "Best Day Ever!"

My father, Robert Boren, a retired professor and a former Forest Service employee and consultant, is watching online. He has spent many days in the forest each year since 1937. My mother died in 2012 after 54 years of marriage. She was a true pioneer who dedicated her life to serving her neighbors.

Joan and I have three children, two of whom are here today, along with my daughter-in-law Ashlie. We have nine grandchildren. I do everything I can to ensure they enjoy the freedom and opportunity America has given me.

I am thankful to be supported by many friends and family members who share a love of our country and of its natural beauty. A few of them are here today.

The US Forest Service has always been a part of my life. When I was young my father worked for the Clayton Ranger District. There were too few employees and too much to do, but somehow Dad and the Ranger got it all done. Other than my dad, the Ranger was the big deal in the forest back then. Later in life, my father was a consultant to the USFS and the Interagency Fire Center.

My older brother, Dave, and I had a small logging business when I was 14 years old. We bought trees from the Forest Service and turned them into fence posts and poles for sale to neighboring ranchers. Later, we were Forest Service employees, planting thousands of trees. As a volunteer firefighter I have the opportunity to work alongside the Forest Service when wildfire threatens our small mountain community, as it did last summer.

I have accessed the forest in about every way possible: on foot, horseback, skis, snowshoes, snow machines, snow cats, bicycles, motorcycles, ATVs, UTVs, automobiles, rafts, motorized boats, paddle boards, kayaks, airplanes and helicopters. This gives me a good idea of what works and what could use some improvement in terms of public access to the forest.

The Forest Service runs through both branches of my family. My wife's grandfather, Leonard Berg, was a career Forest Service employee, finishing his career in Washington, DC. I admired him greatly. And

now, toward the latter end of my career, I have had many opportunities to work with federal employees like him relating to my stewardship of several farms and ranches.

In 1984 I dropped out of college, married Joan, and moved to Chicago to start a career in commodity futures and options trading and brokerage. After 14 years around the trading pits, we moved back to Idaho and started an investment management business with my brother, which led eventually to the development of Clearwater Analytics, an investment portfolio reporting business that disrupted its industry and became a NYSE-listed company with institutional clients all over the world. I expect each of you gains some benefit from the efficiency and knowledge Clearwater provides to the many companies that provide you with products and services.

I have been blessed to work with and learn from many great people. My career experience can be helpful to many people in the US Department of Agriculture as we serve the American citizens who own our national forests and grasslands and benefit from their resources, including timber, forage, minerals, clean air and water, and recreation.

If confirmed I will always be grateful to you, President Trump, Secretary Rollins and the citizens of our beautiful and unique country for the opportunity to serve as the USDA Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment.