

Chairman Boozman, Ranking Member Klobuchar, and distinguished Senators of the Committee—

I first want to thank President Trump for the nomination to serve as the General Counsel at the United States Department of Agriculture. I had the great privilege to serve during the President's first term. It would be an honor to work on the President's behalf a second time. I also want to thank Secretary Rollins for her confidence in my ability to work as the agency's lead attorney. Secretary Rollins has laid out an ambitious agenda for USDA. I hope to have the chance to help Secretary Rollins implement her vision for USDA.

Thank you to this Committee for its consideration of my nomination. I am grateful for the opportunity to have met with several members of this Committee. During those discussions I heard firsthand about this Committee's priorities as well as the uncertainties facing U.S. agriculture and what USDA might do to mitigate such uncertainties.

And if I have the fortune to be confirmed, I look forward to working alongside the men and women at USDA who work each and every day on behalf of our nation's farmers, producers, and the broader American public.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay special thanks to my wife Kristin, my mom and dad, my sister Cami, and my wider family. I am indebted to each one of them and deeply appreciative of their unending support and love.

The chance to return to USDA and lead the Office of General Counsel presents a significant opportunity to help this nation's farmers and producers. Prior to serving at USDA in the President's first term, I would not have characterized myself as an ag person. But having spent nearly three years at the Department, I learned about agriculture and the great sacrifice many of our farmers and producers make to feed this country. Farmers, ranchers, and producers not only create a great bounty for this country, but also these individuals establish a stability and rootedness in the body politic. It is our farms that offer a glimpse of American life across generations. It is our farms that promise a just reward for a hard day's work. And it is our farms that preserve a rural way of life in this country. These are all things worth protecting.

Too often many take this country's healthy, affordable, and abundant food supply for granted. And in this moment, that blessing faces many challenges. Dynamic consumer preferences, foreign market access, regulatory uncertainty, access to credit, and weather are just a few of the challenges facing our agriculture sector.

Congress has equipped USDA with tools to stand alongside farmers and producers in the face of such turbulence. And while the Office of General Counsel does not set policy, OGC can play a substantial role in advising the Secretary and USDA's mission areas on available legal authorities to respond to these adversities.

In my first stint at the Department, I saw firsthand how much OGC can contribute to a sense of regulatory certainty. OGC plays an outsized role in the Department's rulemaking efforts. I aspire to counsel the Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, and the mission area Undersecretaries on

how to ensure we achieve the President's policy goals while at the same time fortifying final rulemakings against inevitable challenges. OGC's close involvement on major rulemakings creates the best possible conditions for the President's deregulatory agenda. The President's agenda will free our farmers from unnecessary or anachronistic regulatory burdens. The President's agenda will incentivize advances in agriculture technology, including precision ag and biotechnology. And the President's agenda will best position our farmers and producers to compete. An OGC that delivers on the President's agenda is an OGC that does justice for our farmers and producers. If I am confirmed, I will work each day on behalf of the President and the Secretary for the betterment of our farmers and producers.

Again, I thank this Committee for its consideration of my nomination. And I look forward to answering your questions today.