

U. S. CONGRESS. SENATE.

# JAMES G. WATT NOMINATION

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HEARINGS  
BEFORE THE  
COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
UNITED STATES SENATE

NINETY-SEVENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON THE

PROPOSED NOMINATION OF JAMES G. WATT TO BE  
SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

JANUARY 7 AND 8, 1981

Publication No. 97-1

PART 1



DOCUMENTS DEPARTMENT

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Mr. WATT. If it were appropriate, Mr. Chairman, I would like to move that the committee adjourn and act on the record that has been presented. [Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. I don't blame you for that request, but I rather suspect the record will be amplified before we get to that point.

Mr. WATT. Well, it was worth a try. [Laughter.]

**STATEMENT OF JAMES G. WATT, PROPOSED NOMINEE TO BE  
SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR**

Mr. WATT. As you can tell, I am pleased and honored to have been accompanied to the table by the men who were just here. My political roots are deep into the State of Wyoming.

My legal residency is in the State of Colorado, and my professional and business base is the Rocky Mountain West. So I present myself to you, Mr. Chairman, and the members of this committee, as President-elect Reagan's nominee to be the Secretary of the Interior. It is an honor for me to do that.

I have a prepared statement, and with your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to read that and not abbreviate it.

I began my professional life sitting in this room behind your former colleague Senator Milward Simpson, the father of Wyoming's junior Senator, Alan Simpson. For 4 years I served that distinguished American as he sat on the forerunner of this committee and addressed issues critical to the Nation.

In many respects, my thinking is a product of years of staff service with the U.S. Senate. I understand and have confidence in the congressional system, its traditions, and values.

I pledge to this committee that, if confirmed, I will work closely with the Senate and the House of Representatives on behalf of the best interests of America.

The position of Secretary of the Interior carries with it tremendous responsibilities that will require a total commitment of energy, ability, and experience. Service as a steward of much of the Nation's vast resources and its environmental values, coupled with the obligation and duty to carry out statutory mandates of Congress that are not always compatible, is a great challenge.

I pledge to this committee, as I did to President-elect Reagan, that I will bring to bear all of my experience, philosophical commitment, and ability on the responsibilities the Secretary of the Interior has to the Nation.

The tremendous complexities and statutory requirements vested in the Secretary's Office fill that job with conflict and controversy. The Secretary must have the ability, and the judicial perspective and temperament, to evaluate conflicts. Acting under the law, he must choose actions that will insure commonsense, balanced perspectives in managing lands and waters subject to the multiple use concepts which have been hammered out by Congress.

I am a public man. Most of my professional life has been in the public service, or involved in establishing public policy.

My record, which is open and available to all, will help this committee gain an understanding of how I might act in the future—because of the way I have acted in the past.

My record will show my approach to problems, my general philosophy, and my willingness to listen, to reach out.

My record will demonstrate my adherence to principle and my commitment to the fundamental values of America.

My record will demonstrate that I have the balanced perspective necessary to manage America's natural resources.

I was born, raised, and educated on the plains of Wyoming at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. I have seen the West not simply through the eyes of the summer traveler but as a native, fighting the cold, biting wind, the grinding dust, and the blinding blizzards. I have learned the values of water and land. I know the grandeur and beauty of open space and mountains. I have chosen to live in my native West with its harsh but fragile ways of nature and land.

As man builds his life within nature, he learns, as I have learned, that survival demands balance. As we, as a nation, superimpose man's environment on the natural environment, conflicts occur.

How we resolve those conflicts and hence measure those competing values will determine and shape our future.

During my 7 years with the Department of the Interior, I had the privilege of serving in two totally different capacities. For the first 3½ years, I was Deputy Assistant Secretary for Water and Power Resources. I was involved in the management of Western water resources, in building water resource projects, in marketing the power generated at Federal hydroelectric projects and in resource planning. It was during that period of time that the environmental movement emerged as a strong force. I was on the management team that learned to integrate environmental concerns and considerations into every dimension of natural resources management.

In 1972, Secretary Morton appointed me Director of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation. The Bureau managed the land and water conservation fund which was, and is, one of the most effective preservation and conservation programs in America.

As Director, I worked with all the States in setting up aggressive programs to acquire the best that remains of God's creation for preservation and recreation. In addition, I worked with Federal agencies which acquire national recreation lands with land and water conservation fund moneys—the National Park Service, the Forest Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The primary charge given to me by Secretary Morton was to develop and deliver to the Congress the first nationwide outdoor recreation plan. Congress had asked that the plan be prepared by the Interior Department and delivered to Congress by 1968.

The plan was almost 5 years late before I was instructed to produce it. The job was done. It was done by working in concert with the Park Service, the Forest Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation, State and local governments, and as many conservation, environmental and recreation groups as we could get involved in the process.

We were aggressive in reaching out and involving these groups. The cooperation we received was tremendous.

In November of 1973, the President of the United States delivered the first nationwide outdoor recreation plan to Congress. It was a guide for Congress, and for Federal, State, and local govern-

ments and the private sector, in formulating policies and action programs responsive to the recreation needs of our people.

In preparation for this appearance I have reviewed in detail my 1973 work product, "Outdoor Recreation—A Legacy for America." It continues to represent my philosophy and my commitment to recreation, to preservation and to multiple use of the resources of America. The plan outlines what needed to be done to save, protect, and utilize our shorelines, beaches and estuaries, flood plains, recreation trails, wild and scenic rivers, wilderness areas, islands, reservoirs, natural lakes, rivers, and streams.

It is a record that I am proud of, and it is a record that has been before America since 1973.

In addition to this important part of my record, stands my frequent testimony before both the Senate and House committees in support of additions to our wild and scenic rivers program, our national trails program, and park and recreation areas.

I call the committee's attention also to testimony I presented before the House Interior Committee with regard to the need for increasing the size of the land and water conservation fund. In that regard, I successfully laid the ground work for legislation which enlarged the fund from \$300 million to its present level of \$900 million.

I take great pride in the role that I played for 3½ years building a record in public service with regard to preservation and to the maximization of benefits from recreation lands, as Director of the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation.

After accomplishing my objectives at the B.O.R., I was appointed by the President to the Federal Power Commission.

One of the most challenging areas of FPC responsibility dealt with designating the Alaska natural gas route to consumer markets in the lower 48 States. My three Commission colleagues and I took that responsibility seriously. We came to know Alaska and its resource values as we studied the conflicts that would be created by the construction of a natural gas pipeline across such fragile land.

There were three proposals for pipeline construction. I voted to designate the route which resulted from the NEPA and EIS process. One of the primary reasons for voting for that route was the environmental sensitiveness that I, and later President Carter and then the Congress, recognized.

With the creation of the Department of Energy, the Federal Power Commission was terminated and I was given the opportunity to return to my native West. I moved back to Colorado and helped to create the Mountain States Legal Foundation.

The foundation's very purpose is to assist the courts in making good public policy. It recognizes that the courts in recent years, have become extremely active in making political, social and economic policy. Yet judges are allowed to make decisions only on the record before them. In my opinion, and the opinion of many others who share the philosophy I bring before this committee, there was not a proper balance and perspective given to many of the issues presented to the courts.

The foundation is to counterbalance those who use our judicial system to restrict economic growth and to defend individuals and

the private sector from illegal and excessive bureaucratic regulation. The foundation is dedicated to the values and concepts of individual freedom, our right to private property and the private enterprise system. Over the last 3½ years of its existence, the foundation has been involved in a number of lawsuits—as plaintiff, as intervenor, and as amicus.

The foundation has grown from the one-man shop which I started in July of 1977. It now has a staff which includes 10 lawyers.

In the 3½ years the foundation has been involved in 47 cases.

It has filed suit against the Department of Interior four times.

It has been involved in nine other cases concerning the Department.

Three times it supported the Interior position.

I would like to submit to the committee materials which show the type of cases in which the foundation is involved. Most of the cases deal with the constitutional and statutory rights of individuals as they are frustrated and challenged by excessive regulation and governmental control.

Allow me to conclude by expressing my deepest concern that the environment of the West will be damaged by crisis-oriented, unreasonable programs to develop the energy potential of the West.

It has been my argument that this country must commit itself to a reasoned, environmentally conscious program for developing and utilizing the tremendous energy resources our Nation possesses. Unless we have such a program, economic, social and political pressures will grow to such an extent that the Federal Government will be forced, in a crisis situation, to mount a crash program to develop coal, uranium, oil shale, tar sands, and oil and gas.

All too often, the Federal Government moves in a crisis, not with the precision of a surgeon's scalpel, but with the force of a meat ax. Those of us who love and are committed to preserving the beauty and values of our environment, fear this possibility.

We want the right kind of development to come over time, not the wrong kind of development to come in a crisis.

I am a concerned westerner—a concerned American. I want the Federal and State Governments to strike a balance between the development and protection of our natural resources. We can have reasonable development of our energy resources, and preserve our natural environment, if we are given an opportunity to phase in, with proper safeguards, the expansion being demanded by the Nation.

I have faith in the people of America, in our technology, and in our Government institutions. Together we can build a stronger America that will provide an opportunity for economic freedom and the enjoyment of our natural heritage. But this can be done only if there is a commonsense approach to the balanced use of our natural resource base under concepts that have already been established by the Congress.

The task is enormous, but I believe that with dedication and commitment, and with the resources at our command, we can be successful. I look forward to being a part of the team which can make it happen.

Mr Chairman, members of the committee, I ask to be confirmed to the position for which I have been nominated. I thank you for

the opportunity of presenting this statement. Mr. Chairman, I would like to present for your files and individually a copy of this document, "Outdoor Recreation—A Legacy for America."

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Watt, a copy has been placed in the file. I believe a copy is available to each member of the committee.

Mr. WATT. I have copies right now because it is likely that questions will come up. My record, as it has been published, is still the same as it has been since 1973.

In addition, Mr. Chairman, I would like to have handed out, I think the clerk has a copy, the summary of the 47 cases in which the Mountain States Legal Foundation has been involved.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I submit myself to you and members of the committee for any questions you might have.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Watt, that summary has been presented to each member of the committee, and they have it in their hand. That summary will also be made a part of the record at this point.

[The summary of Mountain States Legal Foundation Legal Activity follows:]

*James G. Watt Nomination: Hearings before the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, U.S. Senate, 97th Cong. 30 (1981) (testimony of James Watt).*