

**OPENING STATEMENT FOR THE
HONORABLE SCOTT McINNIS, CHAIRMAN
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTS AND FOREST HEALTH
OVERSIGHT HEARING ON THE VIEWS AND VISION OF MARK REY,
UNDERSECRETARY FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT,
USDA
NOVEMBER 7, 2001**

Today the Subcommittee will have the distinct privilege of hearing from Mark Rey, the newly confirmed Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment. Along with the Chief of the Forest Service, the position of Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment is at the center of the National Forest policymaking universe. As Undersecretary, Mark will be tasked with the considerable challenge of addressing the many weighty policy issues now confronting the management of America's forestlands. The purpose of today's hearing is to both hear the Undersecretary's views on these important issues and to provide the Undersecretary with our own thoughts, guidance and recommendations.

Mark comes to the position of Undersecretary with a strong background in natural resource policy and in Washington policymaking. Prior to his appointment and confirmation to the Department of Agriculture, he served on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee as the senior staffer for national forest policy and Forest Service administration. In this capacity, Mr. Rey played a leading role in the enactment of a number of important pieces of legislation, including the Herger/Feinstein Quincy Library Act and the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act.

While some national environmental organizations have been quick to cast aspersions on his appointment - something these groups have become rather well practiced at over the years - the reality is that Mark has earned the respect and admiration of Republicans and Democrats alike over the years -- a reality underscored when Mark was confirmed in the United States Senate by unanimous consent. In my opinion, Mr. Rey is the right man for the job of Undersecretary during this critical juncture in the history of the USDA Forest Service.

It is with this that I welcome Mark and thank him for taking the time to appear before our Subcommittee. I know the hearing will be a constructive dialogue, one that I look forward to continuing with Mr. Rey, Mr. Inslee and the other Members of this Subcommittee in the coming weeks, months and years.

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