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**Testimony of David Sutherland – Director of Government Relations
before the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee**

January 29th, 2015

**In Support of the Nomination of Robert Klee
to be Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental
Protection.**

On behalf of The Nature Conservancy, I would like to express our strong support for Robert Klee to be confirmed to continue as Commissioner of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP).

Over the past few decades, The Nature Conservancy has worked with many of the bureaus and units within the DEEP on scores of projects and initiatives. Through this experience, we have developed extensive knowledge of the agency's widely varied initiatives and challenges.

Over the past year, since assuming the Commissioner's position, Robert Klee has demonstrated very capable leadership in all aspects of the agency's critical responsibilities. The DEEP has always been a complex agency, encompassing such disparate responsibilities as natural lands management and acquisition, law enforcement, boating safety, regulation of air and water pollution, campground administration, fisheries management, hunting, and many others. Four years ago, the agency was expanded to include energy planning and utility regulation.

No one person would likely have expertise in all of these areas, but Commissioner Klee came to the position with unusually broad preparation. As Chief of Staff for the previous DEEP commissioner for three years, Mr. Klee had developed impressive knowledge in all aspects of the agency's operations and duties. His academic background is extraordinary, with a law degree, a Ph.D. in industrial ecology, and other degrees in environmental management.

The DEEP has gone through significant changes and made important progress on many fronts over the past four years. Robert Klee was a critical part of many of these changes and accomplishments. He has proven a very appropriate, qualified, and excellent choice to lead the department through the next several years. We urge you to approve his nomination.