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**Statement of Jordan Chin
Student Delegate from Oregon
Youth Watershed Summit (October 6-10, 2002)**

**Before the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
October 8, 2002**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jordan Chin. I am 16 years old, and I attend the Metropolitan Learning Center in Portland, Oregon.

I am here today, Mr. Chairman, as one of the Oregon representatives to the Youth Watershed Summit, hosted by America's Clean Water Foundation, the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center and the Environmental Protection Agency.

When I was invited to attend the Youth Watershed Summit, I jumped at the opportunity because I have always believed that youth involvement in our society could create new visions for our country. This convention of some 250 students selected by their Governors from the 50 states is an outstanding chance for me and for my fellow students to learn, to share and to carry the Clean Water message home to our respective states.

I believe that information about our environment is something that should be shared and made available to every American. Awareness and knowledge are the keys to bringing about a positive change in our society and its attitudes about our fragile environment. Water is what we are made of: it is the source of life. I think that youth involvement and education is an exceptional beginning to that process.

Because I believe in bringing the need for cleaner water to the attention of young people, I am one of the actors who will, this evening, perform the *The Murky Water Caper: A Real Fish Story*, written for ACWF by Deborah Rodney Pex. I am pleased to play the Detective Michelle Tuesday.

Ms. Tuesday is an inquisitive private investigator with a passion for justice and the desire to assure the well being of the creatures and spaces around her. Ms. Tuesday helps the fish, who have



retained her, find the causes of pollution that is contaminating their home. Even with the cheesy jokes, I'm very excited and proud to be a member of the cast. I understand, Mr. Chairman, that some members of your Committee staff may be joining us tonight at the YMCA Camp Letts to see just how *The Murky Water Caper* can be an inspiring and fun way to educate people of all ages who care about the quality of their water. Because this play is packed with information, I would like your permission, Mr. Chairman, to present each member of the Committee with a copy of *The Murky Water Caper* booklet recently published by America's Clean Water Foundation.

I am here today to say thank you to those who were so wise as to give our country the Clean Water Act back in 1972 and to say that I know that the future of water quality rests in our hands as well as yours. As a young person, I want to be very informed about the ways I affect the environment and I want to share that information with my peers.

At home in Oregon, I am currently enrolled in an ecology class at my school and am making a project of finding eco-friendly options for those teenagers, like myself, who are in search of a plentiful wardrobe. Even small things like buying clothes that don't negatively affect our planet can be helpful in more ways than most of us can imagine. And while there is lots of public information available, I am hard pressed to find more than a handful of people outside of my class who are aware of the resources we're draining, or the negative impact we are having on our planet by how we live our lives each day.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, I have one message that I want to leave with you. The people of our country don't seem to be aware of the fact that the environment is deteriorating and is being largely neglected by virtually every person who lives on this planet.

This neglect is not just in other countries or other states...it's not just the distant rain forest down in South America or those wetlands we hear about in other states. It's where we live, it's all around us, it is us. We are fouling the air we breathe, the surface and ground water we drink, the land we live on and the foods that we eat.

I am but one student in a small State on the other side of the country from Washington DC, but I know that every citizen in this country needs to know how important it is for us all to protect our water. They need to know that polluted water affects the health of our parents, our children, our friends, our relatives and people we have never even met. In protecting the Earth we are protecting ourselves, we are protecting all people, all animals and all the vegetation that sustains us.

If we care for our planet, we are taking care of each other. I sincerely hope that our testimony before you this morning has shown you, the guardians of our country, that teenagers can care. We are drinking in the information provided at the Youth Watershed Summit, and we're thirsty for more. We want a healthy planet to grow up in, to go to college in and to live and raise our families in. Everyone on this committee and many of the people in this room have the power to protect our water. I want you to know that we will be there to help.

Thank you for listening.