

President-Elect Obama Announces Choices for Interior and Agriculture Posts

CHICAGO – President-elect Barack Obama announced that he intends to nominate former Governor Tom Vilsack as Secretary of Agriculture and Senator Ken Salazar as Secretary of the Interior.

President-elect Obama said, "It's time for a new kind of leadership in Washington that's committed to using our lands in a responsible way to benefit all our families. That means ensuring that even as we are promoting development where it makes sense, we are also fulfilling our obligation to protect our national treasures. It means ensuring that we are using our farmlands not only to strengthen our agricultural economy, but to grow advanced biofuels that will help make the United States energy independent and create jobs. That is the kind of leadership embodied by Ken Salazar and Tom Vilsack, and I look forward to working with them in the years ahead."

The following announcements were made today:

Governor Tom Vilsack, Nominee for Secretary of Agriculture

Governor Tom Vilsack was elected Democratic governor of Iowa in 1998 and re-elected in 2002. As a governor from a farm state, Vilsack has been vocal in his support for the farm bill and for renewable sources of energy. In 2003, Vilsack passed the Grow Iowa Values Fund through the state legislature, a \$503 million appropriation designed to boost the Iowa economy by offering grants to corporations and initiatives pledged to create higher-income jobs. Before serving as Governor, Vilsack was mayor of Mount Pleasant, Iowa, and was elected to the Iowa State Senate in 1992. Vilsack was born in Pittsburgh in 1950, and graduated from Hamilton College and Albany Law School. Vilsack and his wife, Christie, have two children.

Senator Ken Salazar, Nominee for Secretary of the Interior

Senator Ken Salazar was elected to the United States Senate in November 2004. A farmer for more than thirty years, Senator Salazar helped form the El Rancho Salazar partnership in 1981, and he and his wife have owned and operated small businesses in Colorado. From 1999 to 2004, Salazar served as Colorado's Attorney General. He served as chairman of the Conference of Western Attorneys General. From 1987 to 1994, Salazar served in the Cabinet of Governor Roy Romer as chief legal counsel and executive director of the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. Salazar also practiced water and environmental law in the private sector for eleven years. Salazar received a political science degree from Colorado College in 1977, and graduated with a law degree from the University of Michigan in 1981. Ken and his wife, Hope, have two daughters, Melinda and Andrea, and one granddaughter, Mireya.

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