

Opening Statement by Ranking Member Rob Bishop
House Natural Resources Committee
November 17, 2020

Today we meet in what will likely be the last Natural Resources Committee hearing of the 116th Congress.

We are considering nine bills, most of which are included in Chairman Grijalva's H.R. 8632, the Ocean-Based Climate Solutions Act. There is no reason these have been added to this hearing, unless it is to give those members 5 minutes to speak. It's a waste of my time and of the committee's time.

Jessica Hathaway, the editor in chief of *National Fisherman*, described the Chairman's bill perfectly. She wrote that "Reading its 324 pages felt like swinging at a piñata packed with a mix of treats and lit fireworks."¹ I agree with Ms. Hathaway. The bill authorizes billions in new grants and programs to distract from the economically devastating policies being pushed.

The majority is pushing a so-called "30 by 30" idea of locking up 30 percent of our oceans by 2030 all under the guise of "protecting biodiversity while tackling climate change."² The reality is much different. This policy is woefully misguided, it does little to improve fisheries, undermines the Magnuson-Stevens Act, and even worse it is detrimental to American fishermen.

Our fisheries are not at the brink of collapse. According to NOAA, "91 percent of stocks for which we have assessments are not subject to overfishing and 84 percent are not overfished."³

Further, nearly 90 percent of federally managed fisheries fall below their annual catch limits,⁴ meaning that our commercial and recreational fishermen are not being allowed to harvest at maximum sustainable levels.

Dr. Hilborn, a distinguished marine biologist and fisheries scientist at the University of Washington and our witness has stated that "[t]he major threat to sustainable jobs, food, recreational opportunities and revenue from U.S. marine fisheries is no longer overfishing, but underfishing."⁵ I look forward to listening to his testimony.

I think it's worth repeating that the Magnuson-Stevens Act is not just for the conservation and management of fishery resources, but also "to assure that our citizens benefit from the employment, food supply, and revenue which could be generated"⁶ from these resources.

Just as locking up large sums of lands has been a terrible and expensive idea, locking up 30 percent of our oceans does not translate to good stewardship. There are better ways of managing our fishery resources, again the Magnuson-Stevens Act, that do not put an industry that supports 1.6 million U.S. jobs at risk.

I would be remis if I didn't point out the timing of this bill. Our fishery industry has been hard hit by COVID-19. Instead of helping, it seems the majority is more interested in putting our fishermen's livelihoods at risk in the name of conservation.

¹ <https://www.nationalfisherman.com/national-international/ocean-climate-bill-is-a-grab-bag-for-marine-stakeholders>

² <https://naturalresources.house.gov/media/press-releases/chairs-grijalva-castor-introduce-landmark-oceans-solutions-bill-to-tackle-climate-crisis>

³ [Testimony of Chris Oliver, Assistant Administrator for the National Marine Fisheries Service, to the House Committee on Natural Resources, September 26, 2017](#)

⁴ http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/sfa/laws_policies/msa/

⁵ [Testimony of Ray Hilborn, Professor at the University of Washington, given to the House Committee on Natural Resources, September 11, 2013](#)

⁶ 16 U.S.C. 1801(a)(7)

Lastly, I want to point out that this bill bankrupts the LWCF by banning its main revenue source. Chairman Grijalva constantly reminds us that LWCF is one of our nation's bedrock conservation laws. I want to remind him that OCS revenues provide nearly 100% of the funding for LWCF, as well as significant revenues to Gulf of Mexico coastal states for coastal resources restoration.

This ban is even more ridiculous after we just locked in mandatory spending of \$900 million in perpetuity with the so-called Great American Outdoors Act.

I yield back.