

Opening Statement
The Honorable Doug Lamborn (R-CO)
Chairman
House Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee
Legislative Hearing on H.R. 221, H.R. 1176, and S. 140
November 2, 2017

The Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee meets today to consider three bills that nearly span the wide-range of our subcommittee's jurisdiction.

The first bill we will consider today is H.R. 221, the Hydrographic Services Improvement Amendments Act, introduced by our colleague Don Young of Alaska. This bill, championed by the Alaska delegation in the House and the Senate, reauthorizes NOAA's critical ocean surveying and mapping program. Congress first authorized ocean surveys in U.S. waters more than 200 years ago. Since then, this program has collected critical data on the ocean floor and navigation channels that have supported a myriad of ocean-related economic activities such as fishing, trade, and energy development.

While NOAA has covered a lot of ground with this program, inferior techniques and technologies have resulted in a significant backlog of U.S. waters that are not adequately mapped. We will hear testimony today the real dangers that are presented when our nation's navigation channels are improperly mapped or have features that are not mapped at all. While it may not be a surprise that a federal agency has been slow to adopt efficient techniques and technologies, the private sector has stepped up to the challenge to help NOAA chip away at their dangerous backlog under this program. Mr. Young's bill supports the partnership between NOAA and companies such as Fugro (*Fu-Grow*) that have access to the resources and advanced technologies that can map the ocean floor in a fraction of the time – and usually at a fraction of the cost – that it would take the federal government to conduct the same surveys.

Today we will also consider H.R. 1176, the Keep America's Waterfronts Working Act, introduced by Ms. Pingree (*Ping-re*) of Maine. This bill establishes a grant program within the Coastal Zone Management Act for states to utilize and preserve working waterfronts in the 35 eligible coastal and Great Lakes states. This bill also establishes a federal task force – led by the Secretary of the Interior – to identify and address state needs with respect to working waterfronts. While the Coastal Zone Management Program has largely been a state-driven program, this bill inserts layers of federal bureaucracy that seem to run counter to the congressional intent of the original Act. It is unclear why – under the bill – the Department of the Interior is responsible for the federal task force, while the Department of Commerce administers the grant program. We also need to clarify how the "working waterfront covenants" required under the bill would impact private property rights for waterfront owners. I look forward to gaining a better understanding of these and other provisions within the bill, and I want to thank

Congresswoman Pingree (*Ping-re*) for coming before the Subcommittee today to testify on her bill.

I also want to recognize and thank Governor LePage of Maine for taking the time out of his busy schedule to come down to D.C. and testify before our Subcommittee on this legislation. I cannot overstate how critical it is – especially for this Committee – to have a state perspective on resource management activities. Whether it is Endangered Species Act management in the west or management of our coastal resources in the east, your input is invaluable.

Finally, the Subcommittee will consider S. 140, sponsored by Senator Flake of Arizona. This bill amends the White Mountain Apache Tribe's standing water rights settlement to clarify a use of funds already allocated under that settlement to complete the Tribe's rural water system. While this bill is merely a technical correction, we will hear today how important it is for the Tribe to finish construction of their water system.

I want to thank the witnesses for traveling here to be with us today. Your input is extremely valuable as we work through the legislative process, and I look forward to hearing your testimony.