

**Opening Statement
The Honorable Daniel Webster (R-FL)
Vice-Chairman
House Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee
Legislative Hearing on H.R. 2947 and H.R. 4880
February 27, 2018**

The Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee meets today to consider two bills that will codify several Coastal Barrier Resources System maps in Florida and Delaware.

The first bill we will consider today is H.R. 2947, the Strengthening Coastal Communities Act of 2017, introduced by our colleague and my fellow Floridian, Rep. Neal Dunn. In 2016, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service released its final report to Congress that provided recommendations for the adoption of revised and digitized maps for the Coastal Barrier Resources System. Mr. Dunn has been a powerful advocate for his constituents on this issue since he came to the House at the start of the 115th Congress. Neal, I want to thank you for your leadership on this issue.

H.R. 2947 would codify the three new CBRA maps in Mr. Dunn's district. These maps have the support of the local community and would generate savings to the American taxpayer. Signed into law by President Reagan, the Coastal Barrier Resources Act has achieved the dual goals of responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources and our coastal resources as well.

According to a 2002 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service report the CBRA was on track to save the American taxpayer \$1.3 billion by 2010 and another \$200 million in federal disaster relief by 2050. The savings have only continued. Furthermore, a 2007 Government Accountability Office study found that 84% CBRS units remained undeveloped and only 3% of units experienced significant development since the passage of CBRA.

The second bill we will consider is H.R. 4880, sponsored by Congresswoman Lisa Blunt Rochester from Delaware. This bill would codify the new, digital CBRA maps in Delaware.

CBRA is an effective, fiscally conservative program that enjoys broad, bipartisan support. It is an important program for my home state of Florida and for coastal communities across the country. Today is just the first step. Eventually we plan to work with affected members to codify the pilot project maps in a comprehensive package.

I want to thank our colleagues, Mr. Dunn and Ms. Blunt Rochester for their continued work on this issue and for being here with us today. I also want to thank our witnesses for being here, especially Mr. Griffiths who traveled from Florida to represent the Bay County community and express local support for H.R 2947. Your input is extremely valuable, and I look forward to hearing testimony from you and all our witnesses.