

**Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife
Legislative Hearing
1334 Longworth House Office Building
July 25, 2019
10:00 AM**

**Legislative Hearing on
H.R. 335, H.R. 729, H.R. 2185, H.R. 3115, H.R. 3237, H.R. 3510, H.R. 3541, H.R. 3596, H.R.
3723**

Chair Huffman, thank you for holding this important legislative hearing on a host of bills that help address climate change by building coastal resilience, improving water research, and promoting environmentally and economically viable water projects.

While I am in general support of all the bills addressed at today's hearing, I would like to highlight the ones that could directly help my district, the Northern Mariana Islands, combat the worsening effects of climate change, including severe weather events and coastal erosion that, unfortunately, my constituents are all too familiar with.

Rep. Pallone's bill, H.R. 3115, the Living Shorelines Act of 2019, would help coastal communities across the country, including the territories, by providing additional vital federal resources to help communities plan, prepare for, and adapt to increased vulnerability to flooding. The bill would establish a grant program to be administered by NOAA to fund climate-resilient living shoreline projects to protect coastal areas using natural materials and systems. Priority for funding would be given to areas recently affected by natural disasters and those with histories of coastal erosion.

H.R. 3510, the Water Resources Research Amendments Act, introduced by Rep. Harder reauthorizes USGS grant program funding under the Water Resources Research Act through 2024. While the Northern Mariana Islands does not have its own Water Resources Research Institute, the Institute housed in the University of Guam also serves the Northern Marianas and the Federated States of Micronesia. Its aim is to conduct water research to improve water supply reliability and train water engineers and scientists to build capacity for the region. The bill also improves oversight and accountability over the Water Resources Research Institutes by requiring

the Secretary of Interior to submit a report to Congress on their effectiveness on researching and resolving state and regional water problems.

H.R. 3541, the Coastal State Climate Preparedness Act of 2019, sponsored by Rep. Carbajal, amends the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 by establishing a coastal climate change adaptation preparedness and response program. The program would assist coastal states and territories, through funding and technical assistance, to develop coastal climate change adaptation plans to minimize the effects of climate change. Comprehensive adaptation plans, with community and stakeholder input, will help coastal communities better understand potential risks and identify strategies to improve safety.

H.R. 3596, Keep America's Waterfronts Working Act, authored by Rep. Pingree, establishes a Working Waterfront Task Force and a working waterfront grant program. Working waterfronts are vital for coastal industries, such as fishing and other tourism-related activities. This bill establishes a task force to identify critical needs for particular waterfronts and identifies climate-related threats including rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and extreme weather events. H.R. 3596 would empower coastal communities to plan for and work to build the resiliency of working waterfronts.

Chair, these are important bills that will assist coastal communities and other areas of our nation prepare for and cope with the very real effects of climate change and a warming planet. I urge the committee to hold a markup and report these bills so that they may be brought to the Floor. Our communities are already facing the damaging impact of climate change. It is evident that conditions will only get worse. We must act now.

Thank you.