

**Chairman Jared Huffman**  
**Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**

**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**

**July 25, 2019**

**Opening Statement**

Good morning. I want to welcome everyone here today to examine nine bills, including several that will help communities prepare for climate change. It's long overdue for Congress to pass legislation that addresses climate change, and today we are going to discuss some real solutions for coastal resilience and water supply.

Over forty percent of the U.S. population lives in coastal shoreline counties. Many of today's bills provide coastal communities with innovative tools to address climate change's impacts to their safety, economy, livelihoods, infrastructure, and recreational activities.

I hope we can have a productive conversation and that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle will support these bills, which would help protect the lives and livelihoods of coastal Americans. Over half of the members on this subcommittee represent coastal districts. They know as well as I do that the impacts of the changing ocean are already upon us.

If you don't believe me, all you need to do is visit coastal towns and talk to the residents. I have the unique pleasure of representing hundreds of miles of coast, from the Golden Gate Bridge to Oregon's border. But all of this coast will be, and has already been, impacted by climate change. Outbreaks of harmful algal blooms caused by warming waters have cost fishermen in my district hundreds of millions of dollars. Our iconic kelp forests have been dying off at an unprecedented rate due to increased ocean temperatures. And in Humboldt Bay, we expect to experience the [highest rate of sea level rise](#) in all of California.

The reality is that if we want to keep living on the coast, we must help our coastal communities prepare. Coastal resilience strategies include investing in nature-based infrastructure to attenuate coastal hazards, providing resources for states to develop adaptation plans, and preserving our working waterfronts. All of those options are presented in today's bills.

Several of these bills present solutions within the framework of the Coastal Zone Management Act or CZMA. Mr. Kilmer's Tribal Coastal Resiliency Act recognizes the disproportionate impacts climate change has on indigenous communities and provides a funding source to help Tribes build coastal resilience and protect their cultural land. Ms. Norton's District of Columbia Flood Prevention Act adds DC to the CZMA to help deal with extreme flooding events like the one that occurred just a few weeks ago. Mr. Carbajal's Coastal State Climate Preparedness Act creates a grant program to fund coastal state adaptation plans that enable states to plan, mitigate, and adapt to climate change. And Ms. Pingree's bill, the Keep America's Waterfronts Working Act, aims to protect coastal access for water-dependent businesses, including commercial and recreational fishing, aquaculture, and boatbuilding.

I found NOAA's testimony about some of these bills contradictory. On one hand the agency wants credit for the good work it is already doing on coastal resilience, on the other hand, the President's budget proposed to gut or eliminate key funding for those same programs, including the CZMA. As some of the witnesses here will attest, these bills only scratch the surface of the efforts needed to address rising sea levels and other coastal resilience issues in the near future. We need to be doing more, not less.

In addition to CZMA programs, we'll also discuss Mr. Pallone's Living Shoreline's Act. This bill presents an incredible opportunity for communities to install living shorelines that not only protect coasts from storms, but also sequester carbon, improve shoreline stabilization, and provide important habitat for fish and other wildlife. And Mr. Mast's bill, the South Florida Clean Coastal Waters Act of 2019, is designed to help South Florida deal with reoccurring harmful algal blooms.

We will also have an opportunity today to hear about three bills focused on improving our water supply reliability, which is crucial as we prepare for the water supply challenges brought on by climate change.

The Desalination Development Act, authored by Mr. Levin, reauthorizes the Bureau of Reclamation's desalination project grant program. This bill also prioritizes forward-thinking approaches to desalination, such as harnessing renewable energy for plant operations and encouraging projects that reduce communities' reliance on unreliable, far-flung water exports from imperiled ecosystems. Desalination is an essential component of an all-the-above water resources strategy, and this bill recognizes the critical need to use all tools available to meet western water needs.

We'll also hear about Mr. Neguse's bill to reauthorize a successful endangered species conservation program on the Platte River in Central Nebraska. This is a program that has brought states, conservationists, water users, and federal agencies together in a collective effort to restore habitat while allowing responsible water use. This bipartisan bill is cosponsored by the entire delegations of Colorado, Nebraska, and Wyoming, which are the three states that have partnered on this program for the past 12 years.

Finally, we'll consider Mr. Harder's Water Resources Research Amendments Act, a bipartisan bill that will reauthorize the program that supports the water research institutes housed at universities in every state in the nation. These institutions lay the scientific groundwork to help us tackle a variety of water management and water quality problems across the country.

We have a lot of bills before us and I look forward to having a productive conversation today about each of these bills.

With that, I will now invite Ranking Member McClintock to say a few words.