

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

January 17, 2020

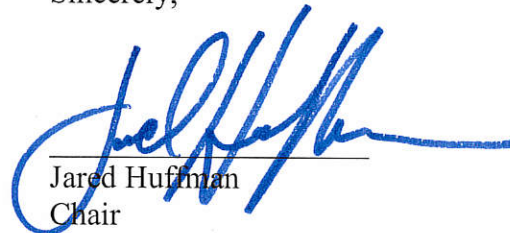
RDML Tim Gallaudet, Ph.D., USN Ret.
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
Deputy NOAA Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 5128
Washington, DC 20230

Dear RDML Gallaudet,

Thank you for testifying before the Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife at our legislative hearing on H.R. 1834, H.R. 2236, H.R. 4679, H.R. 4723, H.R. 5126, and H.R. 5548 on Tuesday, January 14th, 2020. As a follow-up to your testimony, please find the enclosed additional questions submitted by members of the Committee for inclusion in the final hearing record. Please provide your written responses to: Casey MacLean, Subcommittee Policy Aide, **no later than January 29th, 2020**. Committee Rule 3(o) requires responses within 10 business days of the last day of the hearing.

We greatly appreciate your time and insight, and we remain grateful for your contribution to the Committee's work. Should you have any questions, please contact Ms. MacLean at (202) 226-7673 about this request.

Sincerely,



Jared Huffman
Chair

Subcommittee on Water, Oceans, and Wildlife

Enclosure

Questions for the Record from Democrat Members

Questions from Rep. Velázquez for Timothy Gallaudet, Ph.D., USN Ret., Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, Deputy NOAA Administrator

1. Secretary Gallaudet, what would you say is the biggest knowledge gap in understanding impacts of climate change not just on fishing communities but on the downstream effects to small businesses on working waterfronts, the seafood and food service industries, and consumers?

Follow Up: How is NOAA working to close this gap?

2. According to FEMA, more than 40% of small businesses never reopen after a disaster; for those businesses that do reopen, only 29% remain in operation after two years. In your testimony, you state NOAA strives to ensure disaster assistance to fisheries in an effective and timely manner. Following a disaster, how does NOAA collaborate with FEMA and the SBA to ensure disaster assistance is provided to local fisheries, particularly small fisheries, in a timely and efficient manner?
3. How would H.R. 5548, along with additional guidance from Congress help NOAA to reduce this timeline for fisheries, particularly small fisheries recover from natural disasters?

Questions for the Record from Republican Members

Questions from Rep. McClintock for Timothy Gallaudet, Ph.D., USN Ret., Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, Deputy NOAA Administrator

1. The Surgeon General of the United States has found that treatment for skin cancer costs \$8.1 billion per year and that more than two people die of skin cancer in the U.S. every hour. The use of comprehensive sun-safe practices, including and especially the regular use of broad spectrum sunscreens that protect against both UVA and UVB rays, is crucial in preventing this deadly disease. In your testimony you cite that there is overwhelming and proven scientific evidence for the toxicity of sunscreen chemicals to the marine environment. However, only minimal tests have been performed related to the effects of oxybenzone and octinoxate on coral. The studies performed on oxybenzone occurred in a laboratory environment and did not conform to standards related to test run-times. Further, little to no data have been generated on the toxicity of octinoxate on coral. In its Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 appropriations package, signed into law in December of 2019, Congress authorized and included funding for a study by the National Academy of Sciences study on this very issue because of the lack of clear scientific evidence through extensive studies on this important issue. Given this, why does NOAA continue to display information from these limited studies on its website without additional independent data and also characterize the hazards of ingredients such as octinoxate and octocrylene without clear and conclusive studies proving such a claim?

Questions from Rep. Fulcher for Timothy Gallaudet, Ph.D., USN Ret., Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, Deputy NOAA Administrator

1. What has the impact of 120% TDG spill on the Columbia/Snake river yielded for juvenile salmon?
2. Is the CRSO BiOp on schedule?
3. Has NOAA conducted studies on bird predation and their impact on smolt and salmon survival on the Columbia river?

Questions from Rep. Jenniffer González-Colón for RDML Timothy Gallaudet, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Deputy NOAA Administrator

1. Rear Admiral Gallaudet, I would like to focus my questioning on Mr. Huffman's bill, H.R. 5548, and the need to improve and streamline the fishery disaster assistance process. Particularly the time it takes to disburse funding to help those communities in need, such as those in Puerto Rico.

As you are aware, in February 2018, the Secretary of Commerce approved the Island's request for a fishery disaster declaration following the impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria. That same month Congress appropriated \$200 million under the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018 for fishery disasters across the Nation, and in June 2018 NOAA allocated \$11.4 million of those funds to Puerto Rico.

However, to date none of that funding has been disbursed. I know and appreciate that NOAA has been working closely with the Puerto Rico Department of Natural Resources to receive the necessary information from them to speed up and issue the award. I also want to recognize and thank your staff for keeping my office informed throughout this entire process. But as you can surely agree, it shouldn't take this long to help fishing communities impacted by disasters.

It is my understanding that NOAA is now targeting March 1st of this year to issue the first portion of Puerto Rico's award, or about \$9.8 million. I take this opportunity to urge you and NOAA to prioritize and take all appropriate actions within your purview to meet this new deadline and avoid any further delays. If there's any way my office can be of assistance, please let me know.

Could you provide the Committee an update on the status of Puerto Rico's \$11.4 million award? When does NOAA expect to issue the second portion of the award, consisting of approximately \$1.6 billion?

2. Can you discuss how spend plans are developed following a fishery disaster declaration and how can we improve that process? Specifically, what actions can be taken, both at the congressional and regulatory level, to streamline the process of developing spend plans and avoid the back and forth between NOAA and the states that commonly delays the disbursement of funds, as seen in Puerto Rico's case?
I believe in your testimony you allude to this, particularly the need for clear guidance to avoid potential lengthy delays in requesting and receiving additional information.
3. What actions can we pursue to ensure the fishery disaster assistance process is more responsive to the needs of fishermen and fishing communities? How can we ensure they have a seat at the table when developing spend plans, for instance?