



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

To: Committee on Natural Resources Republican Members
From: Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries staff: Annick Miller, (annick.miller@mail.house.gov), Doug Levine (doug.levine@mail.house.gov), Kirby Struhar (kirby.struhar@mail.house.gov), and Thomas Shipman (thomas.shipman@mail.house.gov) x58331
Date: Monday, May 19, 2025
Subject: Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1885, H.R. 2294, H.R. 2860, and H.R. 3179

The Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and Fisheries will hold a legislative hearing on H.R. 1885 (Rep. Murphy), “*Town of North Topsail Beach Coastal Barrier Resources System Map Amendment Act of 2025*”; H.R. 2294 (Rep. Ezell), To reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009; H.R. 2860 (Rep. Larsen) “*Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Reauthorization Act of 2025*”; and H.R. 3179 (Rep. Babin), To rename the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge located in the State of Texas as the “Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge” on **Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. (EDT) in 1334 Longworth House Office Building.**

Member offices are requested to notify Jackson Renfro (jackson.renfro@mail.house.gov) by 4:30 p.m. on Monday, May 19, 2025, if their Member intends to participate in the hearing.

I. KEY MESSAGES

- House Republicans are holding a hearing on three bills that promote local control of land use decisions, science-based decision making, and codify an Executive Order signed by President Trump honoring a victim of senseless violence.
- H.R. 1885 promotes responsible development of coastal communities by fixing errors made in the administration of the Coastal Barrier Resources Act in North Topsail Beach, NC.
- H.R. 2294 reauthorizes a program at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that ensures the most up-to-date science and data are in the hands of local decision makers. This ensures the protection of coastal communities and supports the many industries that operate in our marine waters.
- H.R. 3179 honors a young life cut tragically short and ensures Jocelyn Nungaray’s legacy is enshrined forever at the Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge. This legislation codifies President Trump’s Executive Order [*Honoring Jocelyn Nungaray*](#), which he signed on March 4, 2025.

II. WITNESSES

Panel I

- **Members of Congress TBD**

Panel II

- **Mr. David Miko**, Acting Deputy Director of Operations, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC [H.R. 1885 and H.R. 3179]

Panel III

- **Ms. Alexis Nungaray**, mother of Jocelyn Nungaray, Houston, TX [H.R. 3179]
- **Dr. Stephan Howden**, Professor, University of Southern Mississippi, Stennis Space Center, Mississippi [H.R. 2294]
- **Dr. Rob Young**, Director, Program for the Study of Developed Shorelines, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, North Carolina [H.R. 1885] (*Minority Witness*)
- **Mr. Tom Leonard**, Alderman, Town of North Topsail Beach, North Carolina [H.R. 1885]

III. BACKGROUND

H.R. 1885 (Rep. Murphy, R-NC), “Town of North Topsail Beach Coastal Barrier Resources System Map Amendment Act of 2025”

Enacted in 1982, the Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) established the John H. Chafee Coastal Barrier Resources System (System), which consists of undeveloped coastal barriers and other areas of the eastern seaboard, the Great Lakes, U.S. Caribbean territories, and the Gulf of America.¹ CBRA restricts the use of new federal funding that may encourage development on or around certain coastal barriers.² The intention of these restrictions is to “minimize the loss of human life, wasteful expenditure of federal revenues, and the damage to fish, wildlife, and other natural resources associated with the coastal barriers.”³ CBRA is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the System currently encompasses 3.5 million acres.

In 2000, Congress passed the “Coastal Barrier Resources Reauthorization Act” (CBRRA), which included provisions defining whether a coastal barrier is developed or not when it is included in the System.⁴ The parameters included in that bill originated from a 1982 proposed rulemaking entitled, “Federal Flood Insurance Prohibition for Undeveloped Coastal Barriers; Proposed Identification and Submission of Report to Congress,”⁵ which has served as a guideline for USFWS CBRA mapping efforts, even though it was never finalized. Under CBRRA and the proposed rule, the Secretary must consider if:

¹ P.L. 97–348

² *Id.*

³ *Id.*

⁴ P.L. 106–514

⁵ [FR 47 35696](https://archives.federalregister.gov/issue_slice/1982/8/16/35671-35698.pdf#page=26) August 16, 1982. https://archives.federalregister.gov/issue_slice/1982/8/16/35671-35698.pdf#page=26.

- The density of development is less than one structure per 5 acres of land above mean high tide; and
- There is no existing infrastructure consisting of:
 - a road, with a reinforced roadbed, to each lot or building site in the area;
 - a wastewater disposal system sufficient to serve each lot or building site in the area;
 - electric service for each lot or building site in the area; and
 - a freshwater supply for each lot or building site in the area.⁶



Figure 1: The Boundaries of Unit L06
Source: WCTI News Channel 12

H.R. 1885 would require the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to remove the areas of North Topsail Beach, North Carolina, that are located within CBRA Unit L06, which, according to local zoning ordinances, are for purposes other than conservation as of the date of enactment of this Act.

The original CBRA maps, adopted in 1982 and amended in 1990, include sections of North Topsail Beach, NC, in the System's Unit L06, which the town has long disputed.⁷ According to the town, they meet the criteria set out by the CBRRA that prevent these areas from being considered undeveloped coastal barriers.

When areas were determined for CBRA designations in 1982, aerial pictures were used to assess areas under consideration. When the USFWS utilized aerial photographs of the area that now encompasses Unit L06, they could not determine the underground infrastructure at the site. According to the town, "North Topsail Water and Sewer Corporation began constructing, operating, and maintaining water, sewer, and street treatment in 1979. These infrastructure improvements were available to each of the lots in the January 15, 1982, zoning maps."⁸ In addition to sewer systems, reinforced roads, electrical services, and water systems were in place within L06 by 1982.⁹



Figure 2 An approximate map of the areas that would be excluded (shaded in orange) from Unit L06 by H.R. 1885 / Source: Town of North Topsail Beach

⁶ 16 U.S.C. Ch. 55

⁷ "Evidence of a Full Complement of Infrastructure, as defined by the Coastal Barrier Resources Act of 2000, in North Topsail Beach, North Carolina." Topsail Island Shoreline Protection Commission.

https://naturalresources.house.gov/uploadedfiles/evidence_of_a_full_complement_of_infrastructure_in_north_topsail_beach.pdf

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ *Id.*

Separately, in 2021, the USFWS transmitted a map for Unit L06 that makes minor and technical corrections, removing about 2.5 acres from the System.¹⁰ The Bolstering Ecosystems Against Coastal Harm (BEACH) Act codified this map into law in the 118th Congress.¹¹

H.R. 2294 (Rep. Ezell, R-MS) To reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) work in our nation’s marine waters—preparing for and responding to disasters, protecting coastal resources, supporting energy production, or managing federal fisheries—requires the most up-to-date science and data to advise decisions. One of the ways NOAA achieves this objective is through the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS),¹² a program within NOAA’s National Ocean Service that exists as a public-private partnership of coastal observation systems that seeks to collect data to improve this work. IOOS is made up of radar, gliders, buoys, vessels, and different models and forecasts¹³ that collect data points to inform decision-making along our nation’s coasts and in marine waters. This information improves operations for the businesses and industries that operate in our marine waters, supports military operations, and assists in responding to natural disasters like floods and hurricanes.



Figure 3 IOOS Region Map | Source: Integrated Ocean Observing System

IOOS operates along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, the Gulf of America, the Great Lakes, Alaska, the Pacific Ocean, and the Caribbean.¹⁴ Operating in partnership with eleven regional associations allows IOOS to partner with the local communities. It is designed to help develop new technologies and expertise and increase information sharing to accomplish this work.

For example, in the Gulf of America, the Gulf of America Coastal Ocean Observing System (GCOOS) has deployed a glider program that protects communities along the Gulf Coast.¹⁵ GCOOS’ Glider Dashboard¹⁶ is able to take the data that these gliders collect and publish it on its website to be available in real time. This dashboard contains data like salinity, current depth, and water temperature.¹⁷ Similarly, in the Pacific Northwest, the Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observing Systems (NANOOS) is made up of more than 70 different entities to assist with coastal management,

¹⁰ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, John H. Chafee Coastal barrier Resources System, Topsail Until L06. <https://www.fws.gov/cbra/projects/technical-corrections/37-023C-L06-Draft-Map.pdf>

¹¹ P.L. 118-117

¹² National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Integrated Ocean Observing System. About Us. <https://ioos.noaa.gov/about/about-us/>

¹³ IOOS Association. Technologies and Tools. <https://ioosassociation.org/technologies-tools/>

¹⁴ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Integrated Ocean Observing System. Regions. <https://ioos.noaa.gov/regions/>

¹⁵ Integrated Ocean Observing System. Gulf of America Coastal Ocean Observing System. <https://ioos.noaa.gov/regions/gcoos/>

¹⁶ Gulf of America Coastal Ocean Observing System. Glider Dashboard. <https://gandalf.gcoos.org/#>

¹⁷ *Id.*

maintenance of the region's estuaries, and tracks similar data for fishing communities and the ports that operate in the region, among others.¹⁸

While NOAA's work on these issues has been ongoing for decades, IOOS was formally authorized by Congress in the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-11).¹⁹ Authorizing this program formalized the structure and process for IOOS to collaborate with national and regional partners and other federal agencies to carry out this work.

H.R. 2294 reauthorizes this program at its current authorization level of \$56 million per fiscal year (FY) from FY 2026 through 2030.

H.R. 2860 (Rep. Larsen, D-WA) “*Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Reauthorization Act of 2025*”

In 1998, Congress authorized the Northwest Straits Advisory Commission as part of P.L. 105-384.²⁰ This Commission was created to respond to public resistance to a national marine sanctuary that was proposed in the region. It is focused on proactive engagement as local communities work to protect their marine resources.²¹ Notably, advocacy from local leaders caused the sanctuary proposal to be dropped.²² P.L. 105-384 authorized the Secretary of Commerce to collect data on marine resources in the Northwest Straits, coordinate activities to protect and restore these resources, and carry out activities identified in the Northwest Straits Citizens' Advisory Commission Report to the Secretary of Commerce in 1998.²³

In reauthorizing this entity, H.R. 2860 provides more specificity regarding the commission's membership. It would require that members of certain counties' marine resources committees be appointed and that the Department of the Interior and the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission appoint two members. It also allows the Governor of Washington State to appoint five members representing varying interests.

The bill requires the NOAA Administrator to appoint an employee to serve as a liaison between NOAA and the Commission, coordinating NOAA's programs to achieve the goal of the Commission, which is defined as “to protect and restore the marine waters, habitats, and species of the Northwest Straits region to achieve ecosystem health and sustainable resource” by designing projects, offering recommendations to improve the Straits' health, and partnering with entities like the Puget Sound Partnership along with Tribal entities.²⁴ To accomplish this goal, the Commission is directed to support local marine resource committees and other Federal, state, and local entities to protect these marine resources and provide a forum to discuss these issues. It also requires an annual report to Congress on the Commission's activities and accomplishments in protecting the Northwest Straits' marine resources.

¹⁸ Integrated Ocean Observing System. Pacific Northwest – NANOOS. <https://ioos.noaa.gov/regions/nanoos/>

¹⁹ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Integrated Ocean Observing System. History. <https://ioos.noaa.gov/about/ioos-history/>

²⁰ P.L. 105-483. Title IV – Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative.

²¹ Northwest Straits Commission. History. <https://www.nwstraits.org/about-us/history/>

²² *Id.*

²³ P.L. 105-483. Title IV – Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative.

²⁴ H.R. 2860. To reauthorize the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Act. <https://www.congress.gov/119/bills/hr2860/BILLS-119hr2860ih.pdf>

H.R. 2860 authorizes \$10 million for FYs 2026 through 2031 to carry out this program and authorizes such sums as necessary starting in FY 2032 and moving forward.

H.R. 3179 (Rep. Babin, R-TX), To rename the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge located in the State of Texas as the “Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge”



Figure 4 Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge Sign /
Source: Department of the Interior

Jocelyn Nungaray was a 12-year-old girl from Houston, Texas whose life was tragically cut short on June 16, 2024, when she was raped and murdered by two Venezuelan nationals who entered the U.S. illegally and are allegedly members of the Tren de Aragua gang.²⁵ Jocelyn’s death quickly garnered national attention and renewed calls for more stringent immigration policies.²⁶

To permanently commemorate Ms. Nungaray, known for her special affinity for animals, President Trump signed Executive Order (E.O.) 14229 on March 4, 2025. This order directed

the Secretary of the Interior (Secretary) to change the name of the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge to the “Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge.”²⁷

Alexis Nungaray, Jocelyn’s mother, was a special guest of the President during his March 4, 2025, address to Congress. During his speech, the President said:

*One thing I have learned about Jocelyn is that she loved animals so much. She loved nature. Across Galveston Bay from where Jocelyn lived in Houston, you will find a magnificent national wildlife refuge. A pristine, peaceful, 34,000-acre sanctuary for all of God’s creatures on the edge of the Gulf of America.*²⁸

On March 7, 2025, Secretary Doug Burgum signed a Secretary’s Order to implement President Trump’s E.O.²⁹ H.R. 3179, introduced by Representative Brian Babin on May 5, 2025, would codify the E.O. to ensure that this renaming cannot be overturned by a future administration without Congressional action.

²⁵ “Department of the Interior Renames Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge in Honor of Jocelyn Nungaray,” March 10, 2025. <https://www.doi.gov/document-library/secretary-order/so-3425-renaming-anahuac-national-wildlife-refuge-honor-jocelyn>

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ Executive Order 14229, The White House, March 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/honoring-jocelyn-nungaray/>

²⁸ “Remarks By President Trump in Joint Address to Congress,” March 4, 2025. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/remarks/2025/03/remarks-by-president-trump-in-joint-address-to-congress/>

²⁹ Secretary Order 3425, U.S. Department of the Interior, March 2025, <https://www.doi.gov/document-library/secretary-order/so-3425-renaming-anahuac-national-wildlife-refuge-honor-jocelyn>

Established in 1963 along the Texas coast of the Gulf of America, the refuge protects coastal marsh and prairie, providing habitat for migratory and resident waterfowl, shorebirds, and waterbirds.³⁰ In addition to serving as a sanctuary, it offers the public numerous opportunities for fishing, waterfowl hunting, and wildlife viewing, hosting more than 800,000 visitors a year.³¹ The refuge is managed by the USFWS and is part of the National Wildlife Refuge System.³²

IV. MAJOR PROVISIONS & ANALYSIS

H.R. 1885 (Rep. Murphy, R-NC), “Town of North Topsail Beach Coastal Barrier Resources System Map Amendment Act of 2025”

- Requires the Secretary of the Interior to remove areas of North Topsail Beach, North Carolina located within CBRA Unit L06 from the System. According to local zoning ordinances, areas within Unit L06 are for purposes other than conservation as of the date of enactment.

H.R. 2294 (Rep. Ezell, R-MS) To reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009.

- Reauthorizes NOAA’s Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System at existing funding levels from FY 2026 to 2030.

H.R. 2860 (Rep. Larsen, D-WA) “Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative Reauthorization Act of 2025”

- Reauthorizes the Northwest Straits Advisory Commission at \$10 million for each of FY 2026 to 2031, and then as such sums for each FY thereafter.

H.R. 3179 (Rep. Babin, R-TX), To rename the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge located in the State of Texas as the “Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge”

- Codifies the renaming of the Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge to the Jocelyn Nungaray National Wildlife Refuge.

V. EFFECT ON CURRENT LAW (RAMSEYER)

[H.R. 2294](#)

[H.R. 2860](#)

³⁰ “Jocelyn Nungaray national Wildlife Refuge,” U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. <https://www.fws.gov/refuge/jocelyn-nungaray/about-us>

³¹ *Id.*

³² *Id.*