



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

**Opening Statement of Energy Subcommittee Ranking Member Roger Marshall
Environment Subcommittee Hearing: Ocean Exploration: Diving to New Depths
and Discoveries**

June 5, 2019

Thank you for holding this hearing, Chairwoman Fletcher. I want to thank our witnesses for appearing before the subcommittee and sharing their perspectives.

Though we are known more for wheat and cattle production, Kansans are affected everyday by our oceans. Weather and climate patterns are one direct impact, but other indirect impacts, such as energy production, international trade routes shipping our exports, as well as recreation and tourism opportunities affect Kansans daily. All Americans benefit from a better understanding of our oceans, whether we live on a farm in western Kansas or a coastal community along the Atlantic Ocean.

June is National Ocean Month and it is fitting we hold this hearing recognizing the importance of researching this part of our planet which has gone largely unexplored. Over 70% of our planet is covered by water and more than 96% of that water is in our oceans. There are more than 13,000 miles of U.S. coastline and 3.4 million nautical square miles within our nation's territorial jurisdiction, however NOAA estimates that only 35% of the ocean water adjacent to the U.S. has been explored with modern technology.

A recent proclamation from the White House notes that our oceans, along with the Great Lakes, generate more than \$320 billion in economic activity annually. As part of NOAA's FY 20 budget submission, Acting Administrator Dr. Neil Jacobs named the development of the blue economy one of his top priorities. Having a better understanding of our oceans is an important component of promoting economic development. Whether it is ensuring a strong fisheries economy, international trade, recreation and tourism, or energy exploration, we all benefit from ocean exploration.

Scientific research is an important aspect of ocean exploration. We will hear from our witnesses today how discoveries from research conducted related to our oceans can positively impact medical research, cleaner energy production, and even the development of spacesuits.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses how this committee can help promote research of our oceans. In January 2018, President Trump signed an executive order to advance ocean-related scientific research and promote greater coordination between federal agencies and ocean partnerships. This committee should ensure that universities, private companies, and non-profit groups can continue the mission of increasing our knowledge of our oceans for the benefit of our country.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back.

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