



Opening Statement of Environment Subcommittee Chairman Scott Franklin

Environment Subcommittee Hearing
To the Depths, and Beyond: Examining Blue Economy Technologies
March 26, 2025

Good morning, and thank you to our witnesses for being with us today. Today's hearing is on a topic that impacts hundreds of millions of Americans daily: the technological advancements of the Blue Economy.

For years, NOAA has set ambitious goals mapping and surveying the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The U.S. EEZ is the largest in the world, spanning over 13,000 miles of coastline and containing 3.4 million square nautical miles of ocean—larger than the combined land area of all fifty states.

NOAA cannot meet these mapping goals all on its own, and private-public partnerships are key to getting this done by the target goal of 2030. Furthermore, a robust private sector contributing all different types of technologies and techniques is critical to our advancement in all things related to ocean science.

Floridians know that the health of our economy is directly connected to the strength of our waterways and ports. The innovations we're discussing today result in a thriving blue economy, which benefits all Americans. Floridians are also no strangers to the direct impact of weather and climate patterns. There are other indirect impacts, such as energy production, international trade routes shipping our exports, as well as recreation and tourism opportunities that are part of daily life in Florida.

Just outside of my district, the port of Tampa Bay is responsible for over \$34 billion in economic impact. It is crucial that the mapping and surveying of this port are up to the highest standards.

That is because constituents of Florida's 18th Congressional District, as well as every district in America, rely on goods and services coming into the Gulf of America every day.

Making sure our critical infrastructure is protected is key to this continued success, as bad actors like China and Russia will seek to undermine the United States.

As we continue to innovate, it is important that the investments we make have the best path to commercialization. Combining NOAA's ocean science expertise with private innovation allows the federal government to operate efficiently and have the greatest possible impact.

Through conversations like this one, we can ensure all Americans are moving in the right direction, together.

I look forward to working with members of the committee to establish a well-rounded approach to this budding market. I again want to thank our witnesses for being here, and I look forward to each of your testimonies.