

**Opening Statement by Congressman Russ Fulcher
Ranking Member, House Natural Resources Committee,
Sub-Committee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife
January 14, 2020**

The sub-committee meets today to hear testimony on a variety of bills.

H.R. 4679 by Mr. Cunningham authorizes a study on the impact climate change has on federal fisheries management. It should be noted that NOAA¹ and GAO² have recently completed similar studies.

H.R. 1834 by Mr. Rooney would ban the use of sunscreens made with oxybenzone or octinoxate in National Marine Sanctuaries that contain coral. I am concerned this bill will limit access to sunscreen options for consumers, as 70% of sunscreens in the U.S. contain the ingredients being banned by this bill.³

¹ <https://spo.nmfs.noaa.gov/sites/default/files/TMSPO188.pdf>

² <https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-827>

³ <https://www.chpa.org/SunscreenBan2018.aspx>

H.R. 2236 by Mrs. Dingell would amend the Magnuson-Stevens Act to create a new definition for forage fish. This proposed definition has already created confusion amongst the regional fishery management councils. One regional council thinks the definition is “too broad”⁴ while another council believes it limits its ability to manage what they consider forage species.⁵

H.R. 5126 by Mr. Graves would amend the Magnuson-Stevens Act to require the possession of a venting tool or a descending device when fishing in the Gulf of Mexico Exclusive Economic Zone.

Finally, we have two bills by our Chairman, Mr. Huffman. H.R. 5548 attempts to assist with fishery disasters and H.R. 4723 aims to further protect an already protected species while attacking western states’ ability to develop and manage water infrastructure.

H.R. 4723 would create salmon conservation areas in watersheds or areas that have “attributes important to sustaining

⁴ https://www.npfmc.org/wp-content/PDFdocuments/MISC/101619_NPFMCcomments_DriftnetsForageFish.pdf

⁵ <https://www.pcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/CantwellForageFishLtr71119.pdf>

viable populations of salmon” or are “regionally significant for the conservation of salmon.” Yet a key criterion not explicitly necessary is the presence of salmon. Just as troubling is the lack of stakeholder inclusion. This bill explicitly leaves out the Bureau of Reclamation, the Army Corps of Engineers, municipalities and other relevant water users from consultation.

In Idaho, we take a different approach. Last year, Governor Brad Little established a workgroup dedicated to addressing salmon and steelhead issues. The workgroup brings together representatives from industry, conservation, sportsmen, state and local leaders, and other stakeholders. I believe this is a better approach to solving salmon recovery issues.

I also must note that this bill includes two controversial provisions. One prioritizes the decommissioning of forest roads and the other makes a significant change to how the NEPA process works. I look forward to hearing from our witness, who will explain how this seemingly small provision can have grave implications.