

Opening Statement for Chair Jared Huffman

Thank you for joining us today to discuss four bills focused on protecting our nation's wildlife and improving its water resources.

The first bill we will discuss today is Representative DeFazio's H.R. 4951, *Canyon's Law*. This legislation prohibits the use of M-44 devices, also known as "cyanide bombs," on public lands and calls for their removal.

These devices are a threat to people, pets, and wildlife. This bill is named after Canyon, a teenager from Idaho who accidentally triggered an M-44 behind his house while playing with his family dog, Kasey. Canyon was seriously injured by the resulting cloud of sodium cyanide and helplessly witnessed his dog perish at his feet. His dad, Mark, is here to testify in the hearing today.

M-44s are not only unsafe, but they have also proven to be ineffective wildlife management tools. Their indiscriminate nature results in the death of non-target species, and they do little to shrink the target species' population size. In fact, scientists have found that coyote populations respond to this sort of wildlife management by having more pups, more often.

Several states have either partially or fully banned these dangerous devices, and this bill would extend that ban to all public lands.

The next bill on our agenda is Representative Keating's H.R. 7918, the *Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance Act*. This bill establishes the Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance Grant Program. It improves our ability to save and rehabilitate stranded sea turtles, all of which are listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

These vulnerable animals are often found stranded on beaches, grappling with plastic waste, entangled in fishing gear, and stunned by the cold.

Through this program, grants will aid the recovery, care, and treatment of stranded sea turtles. They will also help scientists collect and share data from stranding incidents to better understand the causes of such events and how we can prevent them.

Importantly, funding will be available to cover operational costs for facilities that care for stranded sea turtles. A lack of reliable funding has forced these facilities to use aquarium ticket sales to support rescue and rehabilitation efforts. Unsurprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly hampered ticket sales, and funds are running out.

Next, we will discuss Representative Walberg's bill, H.R. 7975, the *Great Lakes Restoration Semipostal Stamp Act*. This bill creates a semipostal stamp, the profits of which will go to a multi-agency effort to restore and protect the Great Lakes Basin and its unique ecosystem.

The Great Lakes are subject to several threats, including, but not limited to, industrial pollution, invasive species, and habitat destruction. These are all, of course, made worse by the escalating climate crisis.

Finally, we will discuss Representative Porter's bill, H.R. 8090, which reauthorizes funding for the Bureau of Reclamation's Basin Studies Program.

The SECURE Water Act of 2009 directed the Secretary of the Interior to assess and address the effects of climate change on water resources within major western river basins, a directive that is implemented through Reclamation's Basin Studies Program. This program is particularly relevant today as over 75 percent of the western United States grapples with the effects of drought made worse by climate change. Climate scientists are telling us to expect hotter, drier conditions and even less available water in upcoming years.

Reclamation's Basin Study Program brings federal technical experts together with state, tribal, and local water managers to comprehensively assess water supply and demand imbalances at the river basin level—including the anticipated impacts of climate change on water resources—and to identify strategies to address those imbalances.

Since completing 17 Basin Studies and with ten more underway, Reclamation has proven the value of this river basin-level examination of water availability and needs in the context of a changing climate. Representative Porter's bill would allow this good work to continue by reauthorizing the program for ten years.

I look forward to hearing from our invited witnesses about all of the bills on today's agenda.

With that, I will turn it over to the Ranking Member for his opening remarks.