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HOW TO IMPROVE OPERATIONS AND IMPLEMENT EFFICIENCIES FOR THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

(112–48)

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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CONTENTS

Page

Summary of Subject Matter iv

TESTIMONY

PANEL ONE

Farr, Hon. Sam, a Representative in Congress from the State of California 3

PANEL TWO

Bamford, Holly, Ph.D., Deputy Assistant Administrator for the National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 6
Currier, Vice Admiral John, Deputy Commandant for Mission Support, United States Coast Guard 6
Salerno, Vice Admiral Brian, Deputy Commandant for Operations, United States Coast Guard 6

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED BY WITNESSES

Bamford, Holly, Ph.D. 25
Currier, Vice Admiral John, and Salerno, Vice Admiral Brian, joint statement 32
Farr, Hon. Sam 34

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

H.R. 1171, a Bill to reauthorize and amend the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act 37
Farr, Hon. Sam, a Representative in Congress from the State of California, submission of 26 letters of support for H.R. 1171 46
United States Coast Guard, additional information to the response to question from Hon. Rick Larsen, a Representative in Congress from the State of Washington, regarding the status of the *Davy Crockett* cleanup 21



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

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July 22, 2011

MEMORANDUM

TO: Members, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation

FROM: Staff, Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation

RE: Hearing on "How to Improve Operations and Implement Efficiencies for the United States Coast Guard"

PURPOSE

On July 26, 2011, at 10:00 a.m., in room 2167 of the Rayburn House Office Building, the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation will meet to receive testimony on ways to improve Coast Guard operations and implement efficiencies in Coast Guard programs.

BACKGROUND

The authorization of appropriations for the Coast Guard expires on September 30, 2011. In the near future, the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure intends to move legislation to reauthorize funding for the Coast Guard and make improvements to Coast Guard programs. In preparation for that legislation, the Subcommittee is holding this hearing to review ways to improve Coast Guard operations and administration.

Annual Authorization

The Subcommittee will analyze authorization levels necessary to maintain existing Coast Guard operations and implement major Coast Guard acquisitions. For fiscal year 2011, the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-281) (CGAA) authorized $6,970,681,000 for operation and maintenance, $1,640,000,000 for acquisition, $1,400,700,000 for retired pay, and $135,675,000 for the Coast Guard

Reserve program. Additionally, it authorized the Coast Guard to maintain up to 47,000 active duty members. This hearing will assess whether or not these numbers are appropriate for fiscal year 2012 and beyond.

Asset Recapitalization Programs

In spite of a series of acquisition reforms undertaken by the Coast Guard, there are still significant capability gaps and delays in acquisitions projects. As such, the Subcommittee will consider ways to address each of the following issues:

- Delays in selecting an Offshore Patrol Cutter to replace the aging Medium Endurance Cutter Fleet.
- Delays in selecting and acquiring cutter boats and unmanned aerial systems for the National Security Cutter (NSC). These systems are necessary for the $780 million NSC's to achieve their promised capability increases over the High Endurance Cutter (HEC) Fleet they are replacing.
- Delays in developing a four-for-three crew rotation system for the National Security Cutters, or otherwise increase operational days at sea for the cutter. Congress began purchasing the NSCs after being promised that eight ships could replace twelve HECs by rotating four crews through every three ships in order to keep the ships underway longer. The Coast Guard has not yet released a plan to achieve this rotation.
- Unmet Coast Guard needs in the now seasonally ice-free waters of the Arctic. Neither of the Coast Guard's Class-I icebreakers are currently serviceable. The POLAR SEA is scheduled to be decommissioned and the POLAR STAR requires costly and lengthy repairs. The Administration has not requested any funding for new polar assets.

Coast Guard Administration

The Coast Guard continues to face challenges in administration of certain programs. The Subcommittee intends to explore these issues, which include:

- Outstanding reports, determinations and regulations mandated by statute, but not yet delivered. Specifically, the Administration is delinquent on the cost-constrained Fleet Mix Analysis and the determination on the need for a back-up navigation system to GPS required under section 219 of CGAA.
- Increased operational costs associated with the new Coast Guard headquarters being built on the West Campus of St. Elizabeth's Hospital. H.R. 2017, the

Homeland Security Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2012 which passed the House of Representatives on June 2, 2011, does not include funding for any other agency to move to St. Elizabeths. The Subcommittee needs to understand the costs and operational implications of moving only the Coast Guard to St. Elizabeths and the costs associated with operating a new headquarters facility.

Parity:

The Coast Guard is the nation's fifth Armed Service. However, active, reserve and retired members of the Coast Guard and their dependents do not always receive the same benefits available to members of the other armed services. In addition, the Coast Guard lacks many statutory authorities available to the other armed services to improve administration and operations.

The CGAA addressed several parity issues, such as leave retention and child care expense authority. However, others were not included and still more have come about as a result of the National Defense Authorization Act of 2010, which passed after enactment of the CGAA. As such, the Subcommittee will examine these issues and look for ways to put the Coast Guard and its servicemembers on equal footing with the other armed services.

Marine Debris:

The Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act (Public Law 109-449), was signed into law on December 22, 2006. The Act authorized $10 million annually through fiscal year 2010 for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to implement a program to map, identify, and conduct impact assessments of marine debris, i.e., any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes, as well as undertake removal and prevention activities, research and development of alternatives to fishing gear posing threats to the marine environment, and outreach activities. The Act also authorized $2 million annually through fiscal year 2010 for the Coast Guard to enforce the requirements of MARPOL Annex 5, which prohibits the at-sea discharge of plastic and trash from vessels. The Act also requires the Coast Guard to conduct outreach programs to boaters to increase awareness of problems associated with marine debris, establish a program to improve waste collection and recordkeeping, take action to improve international coordination, and set up a voluntary program to report locations of marine debris and hazards it present to navigation.

On March 17, 2011, Representative Farr introduced H.R. 1171, the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011 to reauthorize funding through fiscal year 2016 and make changes to certain programs administered by NOAA.

WITNESSES

Vice Admiral John Currier
Deputy Commandant for Mission Support
United States Coast Guard

Vice Admiral Brian Salerno
Deputy Commandant for Operations
United States Coast Guard

Dr. Holly Bamford
Deputy Assistant Administrator
National Ocean Service
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

HOW TO IMPROVE OPERATIONS AND IMPLEMENT EFFICIENCIES FOR THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD

TUESDAY, JULY 26, 2011

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION,
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:03 a.m. in Room 2167, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Frank LoBiondo (Chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Good morning. The subcommittee will come to order. The subcommittee is meeting today to review various ways to improve operations and implement efficiencies at the Coast Guard, as we look to draft legislation to reauthorize the Service. The Coast Guard's current authorization expires at the end of this fiscal year. As such, it is time to review the issues before us, and open the discussion on the legislation.

Today's hearing will do just that, as we will highlight those issues we wish to address, and discuss the best way forward among ourselves, and with the Service's senior leadership. Admirals Currier and Salerno are appearing before us to provide an opportunity for that discussion. I look forward to hearing their perspective on how we continue to move the Service in the right direction.

The crux of any good legislation is a strong foundation. Our subcommittee has held nine hearings over the first 7 months of this Congress, and we have identified several issues that need to be addressed. Today is an opportunity to revisit our most important priorities and ensure that we are well informed before we begin to legislate.

As you all know, I am especially interested in issues including Servicemember parity, challenges and delays in the Coast Guard's acquisition program, and ways to make operations more effective. I also want to ensure we are spending taxpayer dollars efficiently.

Specifically, as I have raised before, I am very concerned that we have spent over $3 billion to build National Security Cutters over the last decade, when the GAO recently found that they provide little additional capability over the 40-year-old vessels they are replacing. This is really hard to believe, but something we are certainly going to have to get into.

I am also concerned that taxpayer is going to have to spend tens of millions more each year to support a new headquarters building

for the Coast Guard. It appears this is being done just to satisfy the Secretary's desire to consolidate DHS agencies at the old mental hospital in Anacostia. Now we understand these costs may rise farther, as the appropriators have decided not to provide funding to move any additional agencies. These issues, among others, will be addressed in the next authorization.

However, it is important that we address them in ways that actually correct problems, and make the Coast Guard a stronger organization. The men and women protecting our Nation deserve the very best. It is incumbent upon us to provide them a strong reauthorization.

Today we will also examine a marine debris program which is due for reauthorization this year. As such, it is important we understand exactly how NOAA administers this program, and how they envision doing so in the near future. Dr. Bamford of the National Ocean Service is here today to provide us with that insight.

And our colleague, Mr. Farr, has taken a special interest in marine debris, and has introduced a reauthorization bill. We will have a chance to hear the finer points of his proposal and explore solutions as we move towards reauthorization.

I want to thank the witnesses for being here today. And with that, I would like to yield to Mr. Larsen for his statement.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for convening this morning's hearing concerning the operations and programs of the U.S. Coast Guard. We welcome this opportunity, as we jointly begin the process of developing authorization legislation for the Service.

The Coast Guard is a multimission agency responsible for a broad range of activities, including mariner licensing, emergency oil spill response, vessel inspections, and search and rescue operations. These and many other activities of the Service are indispensable, and ensure that our coasts and ocean resources are protected, that our ocean, great lakes, and inland waterway commerce remain safe and efficient, and that our maritime industries continue to be vibrant sources of jobs and economic opportunity for the American people.

Despite the vital importance of the Coast Guard, the albatross that has hung around the Service's neck for years is that rarely, if ever, has it been given the resources sufficient to meet its responsibilities, even as Congress has expanded those responsibilities. At our budget oversight hearing on March 1st, we heard a lot about the Coast Guard doing more with less. However, I believe we have also established that the more likely outcome of fewer resources is that our U.S. Coast Guard will be doing less with less.

I have seen no new information since then to alter this view. The fiscal year 2011 budget resolution approved in April largely spared the Coast Guard from Draconian cuts many other agencies faced. This is cold comfort, however, considering the massive cuts in discretionary spending across all Federal programs that are being proposed, portending even less funding than what is presently available to address the Coast Guard's many needs and its efficiencies.

We are past time when we can discuss budget cuts in the absent, or we can blithely toss out bromides and expect the Coast Guard to secure ports, maintain aids in navigation, or respond to natural

or human caused disasters with diminished resources. With this thought in mind I urge this morning that we not simply replow ground we have visited before, but that we look forward.

Certainly we need to examine the Coast Guard's operations and programs to ensure they are mission driven, cost effective, and accountable. But that is not enough. We also need to constructively engage the Service in developing a sound, balanced path forward that realigns our expectation with a level of performance that we can reasonably expect the Coast Guard to deliver, and we will need to do this within the tight budgets the Service likely will receive in the foreseeable future.

As part of this engagement, we should examine joint programs, of which the Coast Guard is a partner, to see how we might improve their implementation to better leverage Federal investments. Partnership programs such as activities implemented by the Coast Guard and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration under the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act can offer a tested and effective business model to expand the capabilities of Federal agencies, while also building effective working relationships with non-Federal stakeholders.

I look forward to hearing the views of our colleague from California, Representative Sam Farr, on the marine debris programs implemented by the Coast Guard and NOAA, and I look forward to working with him and Chairman LoBiondo in moving his legislation that would reauthorize a marine debris act through the committee.

I also urge, Mr. Chairman, that as we move ahead with the Coast Guard reauthorization bill, that we not lose track of several good ideas to increase economic opportunity and enhance jobs that were raised during the June 14th hearing concerning the marine transportation system. Job creation remains my highest priority. And if there is an opportunity to move legislation in this Congress that can jumpstart job growth in the maritime sector and put people back to work on the docks and at sea, I stand ready and willing to work with you, shoulder to shoulder, to reach a successful outcome.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Thank you, Mr. Larsen. Master Chief Coble, do you have an opening statement?

Mr. COBLE. No statement, sir.

Mr. LOBIONDO. OK. Thank you for being here. Our first witness today is the Honorable Sam Farr, representing California's 17th District. Sam, thank you for appearing here today, and we look forward to hearing your testimony.

TESTIMONY OF HON. SAM FARR, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. FARR. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. As a legislator with a Coast Guard station in my district, I really appreciate you doing this oversight hearing, and look forward to working with you.

But I am here also to thank you for holding the hearing on the bill H.R. 1171. This is a bill that Don Young and myself have introduced, along with other Members, and we are very appreciative of the opportunity to have this hearing.

Our oceans are in trouble. And we have exclusive jurisdiction—ownership, essentially—out to 200 miles around the continental United States. And much of it is full of debris and garbage, both domestic and foreign, that has come from other parts of the world. Fourteen billion pounds of trash end up on our beaches and in the ocean every year, and they are the dumping ground for everything we don't want on land. When you think about it, our sewage outfall goes in there, garbage goes in there. We've even had nuclear waste stored in the oceans off San Francisco. The list goes on and on. When we wanted to dump the old Bay Bridge, we dumped it in the ocean offshore, and fishermen get their nets stuck in that huge mess of an industrial dumping site.

We have over 270 species that are impacted by ocean trash, and many of those species are commercial fisheries. And up to 100,000 marine mammals die each year from marine debris.

In addition to these environmental impacts, the economic impacts of marine debris can be devastating. Every year, over 77.8 million Americans from all over the country visit a beach. Most of our constituents, no matter where you are in the United States, take time to go to the beaches, making large contributions to the local tourism economy. What would happen if you were visiting a beach and it looked like this picture up here on the wall? Imagine the impact of trash to the businesses that are trying to survive off of the tourism caused by the attraction of the beach, and then to encounter that kind of trash?

So, Mr. Chairman, it is—as you know, in New Jersey, where in 1988 the State woke up the world with the announcement of all the medical waste that had washed ashore. I remember our former colleague, Jim Saxon, just becoming a big convert on cleaning up the oceans because of that incident that hit both New Jersey and New York. This incident in 1988 cost $3.6 billion in lost tourism revenues.

Our country has come a long way since then, but keeping our beaches clean still requires significant resources. For example, the city of Long Beach in California spends a whopping $17 million each year keeping its beaches trash free.

In 2006, Congress recognized this problem by passing, and without a single negative vote, the original Marine Debris Act, which this bill reauthorizes. The law established programs within NOAA and the Coast Guard to address the problem of marine debris.

Additionally, the law laid the foundation for partnerships between Coast Guard, NOAA, and other Federal agencies with the creation of an interagency marine debris coordinating committee. Since enacted, this multi-agency approach has allowed NOAA and the Coast Guard to coordinate research priorities, monitoring techniques, education programs, and regulatory actions. Ultimately, these Federal partnerships let NOAA and the Coast Guard to more with limited resources.

NOAA and the Coast Guard have also formed public-private partnerships with local communities, academic institutions, and the private sector and the fishing industry. These public-private partnerships leverage private funds, resulting in more resourceful and successful Federal programs. These partnerships have been

particularly effective in addressing derelict fishing gear. Derelict gear can devastate the value of marine fisheries.

For example, over $250 million of marketable lobster is lost every year in the U.S. to derelict gear, a process called ghost fishing—the gear is lost, and it just keeps floating around, and gets snagged—and things get snagged into it and never get recovered. In a time where our fishermen are already facing economic challenges, losses of this magnitude are simply unacceptable.

In response to this, we have a program called Fishing for Energy, a partnership formed between the Coast Guard, NOAA and Covanta Energy and Schnitzer Steel. In this partnership, NOAA and the Coast Guard remove derelict gear from the marine environment. Then Covanta Energy and Schnitzer Steel recycle the gear, and produce electricity.

In the northwest Hawaiian Islands, over 1.4 million pounds of derelict gear have been removed and recycled to produce enough electricity to power 260 homes for an entire year.

In addition, the Fishing for Energy partnership has installed recycling bins at 25 ports across the country, where fishermen can dispose of their old gear at no cost. This provides the fisherman an alternative to costly landfill disposal, as well as an incentive to retrieve any derelict gear that they might find in the water. These bins have already accumulated over a million pounds of gear. In just Cape May, New Jersey, the bins have collected over 48 tons—I believe that's in your district.

In addition to partnerships that increase efficiency, Federal resources are further amplified by granting matching requirements of at least 50 percent. In 2005 through 2009, this law has funded 86 projects with only $6.3 million. And these funds leveraged an additional $7.9 million in non-Federal funds.

One project in particular that is funded through the law is the International Coastal Cleanup. In 2010 the United States had over 240,000 volunteers who cleaned up 4.5 million pounds of trash. This vast participation indicates that the public support for marine debris cleanup is widespread.

I have over 25 letters of support from a variety of stakeholders including fishermen, mapping companies, science organizations, local non-profits, and I ask that these letters be submitted to the record.

In sum, both interagency and public-private partnerships have leveraged the resources and capacity of the Coast Guard. We must act now to ensure that these partnerships are not only maintained, but are strengthened. It is through these partnerships that our country can most effectively and efficiently address the impacts of ocean trash on marine ecosystems, coastal economies, and navigation safety. With reauthorization, a steady stream of funding, the Coast Guard will continue to make significant strides in tackling the problem of marine debris.

So, I ask this committee to reauthorize this bill. There is a companion bill in the Senate introduced by Senator Inouye, and we hope that both of those bills will be moving.

Mr. LOBIONDO. OK, Sam, thank you for your testimony today, for your leadership on this issue. Do we have any Members that wish to comment on Mr. Farr's?

[No response.]

Mr. LOBIONDO. thank you, Sam, we will be in touch.

Mr. FARR. Thank you very much. Thank you for your time.

Mr. LOBIONDO. We will now be prepared for the second panel of witnesses, that will include Coast Guard Vice Admiral John Currier, the deputy commandant for mission support; Vice Admiral Brian Salerno, the deputy commandant for operations, and Dr. Holly Bamford, deputy assistant administrator at the National Ocean Service. I welcome our guests here today.

Let me start off by thanking the Coast Guard for the response that they provided us that—in a letter that we sent to Secretary Napolitano concerning the delivery of the Coast Guard's fleet mix analysis. I appreciate that.

Admiral Currier, the floor is yours.

TESTIMONY OF VICE ADMIRAL JOHN CURRIER, DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MISSION SUPPORT, UNITED STATES COAST GUARD; VICE ADMIRAL BRIAN SALERNO, DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR OPERATIONS, UNITED STATES COAST GUARD; AND HOLLY BAMFORD, PH.D., DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE, NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Admiral CURRIER. Thank you, sir. Chairman LoBiondo, Ranking Member Larsen, members of the subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss Coast Guard mission support activities as part of the subcommittee's efforts to develop a 2011 authorization bill for the Coast Guard.

As the deputy commandant for mission support, I have primary responsibility to ensure that Coast Guard has the people, platforms, systems, and logistics necessary to meet our mission demands. This could not be accomplished without the resources and authorities that are provided to us and the Service by Congress and the administration.

I want to take this opportunity to note the role of this subcommittee, including language in the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 that further strengthens the capabilities of our acquisition program, and enhances housing and child care benefits to Coast Guardsmen on a par with those available to the armed services. I look forward to working with the subcommittee to continue these efforts, as you continue the development of authorizing legislation.

Since the creation of a centralized acquisition directorate in 2007, and continuing with the establishment of mission support enterprise, the Coast Guard as made significant changes that are resulting in improved performance and management over acquisition programs. This includes enhanced governance through compliance with requirements under our major systems acquisitions manual, or MSAM, and expanded roles for Coast Guard technical authorities in the Department of Homeland Security. We are better positioned now to execute all aspects of the acquisition lifecycle, including follow-on logistics, and to consider tough trade-offs when necessary.

Our recapitalized assets are in the field today, sir, providing enhanced safety and security for the American public. We have ac-

cepted delivery of two National Security Cutters, and they are demonstrating capabilities beyond our legacy fleet, and challenging conditions in the Bering Sea and the eastern Pacific. The third cutter, *Stratton*, has just completed successful builder's trials. In May, the first steel was cut for the fourth hull, and we anticipate awarding a production contract for the fifth NSC later this summer.

The commandant has frequently stated that we need eight NSCs, and we are on our way to acquiring these critical assets for the Coast Guard with stable requirements, predictable costs, and preidentified risk. At the same time, the first seven hulls of the Fast Response Cutter are under production, and we are conducting preacquisition activities for the Offshore Patrol Cutter fleet. Together with our recapitalized aviation fleet, small boats, and C4ISR assets, these cutters will bring enhanced capabilities across the Coast Guard's mission set.

The commandant has made the recapitalization one of our Service's highest priorities, and I know that this subcommittee shares our interest in replacing these old ships and aircraft as quickly as possible at the best value to the American taxpayer.

These initiatives would not come to fruition without the men and women who formed the very core of our organization. Much of the Coast Guard's work is done under extremely challenging conditions. But we continue to attract and retain a highly skilled workforce.

As you are aware, we are moving forward with construction of the new Coast Guard headquarters at St. Elizabeths campus, which is also the result—which will result in a more efficient Coast Guard at the programmatic level. With several headquarters elements in one location, I am confident that we will benefit from increased collaboration and efficiency, not only within our organization, but also through partnership with the subsequent DHS agency collocations, or relocations to that site.

However, we anticipate our St. Elizabeths lease cost to exceed that we are currently spending on leases. The projected recurrent lease cost for the Coast Guard's portion of St. Elizabeths is approximately $95 million per year, over $42 million more than we are currently paying for the two buildings that we occupy. We are currently working closely with the Department to close that gap and move forward with this important transition.

Thank you, sir, for the opportunity to discuss the efforts of the mission support organization. And I will be glad to answer any questions that you might have. Thank you.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Thank you, Admiral.

Admiral Salerno, you are recognized.

Admiral SALERNO. Good morning, Chairman LoBiondo, Ranking Member Larsen, and distinguished members of the subcommittee. Very happy to be here to testify, together with my good friend, Vice Admiral Currier, and update you on how we are improving operations and implementing efficiencies within the Coast Guard.

The Coast Guard has used the authority provided by the 2010 authorization act to finalize our leadership structure. Specifically, we have created a three-star deputy commandant for mission support and a three-star deputy commandant for operations. This move helps provide clarity to the entire Service. It underscores that

every function performed by our workforce is tied either to mission execution or to mission support, and it reinforces the mutually dependent nature of these two broad categories of work.

As the deputy commandant for operations, my responsibilities include developing the operational requirements necessary to accomplish Coast Guard missions. This includes the establishment of performance plans, and then tracking performance to ensure we are meeting our objectives. It also includes identifying the right characteristics for the ships, aircraft boats, communications, and sensor systems needed to operate effectively.

And equally important, it involves looking to the professionalism of our workforce, by making sure that we have the proper policies and guidance in place for our people to have a clear understanding of how to operate, how to conduct their mission safely and efficiently, and with a proper focus on our national maritime interest and the public we serve.

The majority of the 137 provisions of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 represent action items for which I am responsible. To comment on just a few aspects of the act, we have identified 29 provisions of the act which require promulgation of regulations; 16 of these are being incorporated into existing rulemaking projects in order to expedite their implementation. We are, of course, also actively working on the other 13 projects.

The act also requires 54 new congressional reports, of which 9 have already been delivered to Congress, and the remaining are either in progress or under review.

In May the Coast Guard briefed the subcommittee staff on our progress achieving the action items under the authorization act. Since that time, we have satisfied some additional requirements, and I am pleased to note that the Coast Guard completed its review of the rules for the use of force by U.S. merchant vessels in defense against piracy, and we have provided guidance to the industry.

Also, the high-latitude study was provided to Congress on July 20th, as you mentioned, and the notice of proposed rulemaking for towing vessels has been sent to the Federal Register.

Recently the Coast Guard also testified on our regulatory program, and we highlighted the many improvements we have been able to put in place, thanks to the investments made by Congress in 2008 and 2009. These investments have allowed us to reduce the average time required to produce regulations, and reduce the backlog of regulatory projects. Although the downward trend has been somewhat offset by the new projects added by the 2010 authorization act, we expect that the internal efficiencies will continue to result in reduced regulatory backlog over time.

I want to assure the committee that we take very seriously the direction provided by Congress. In organizing our regulatory workload we ascribe the highest priority to rulemaking projects which are mandated by legislation. In addition, we make every effort to ensure that the regulations we promulgate are practical, effective, and are pursued by the full appreciation of the economic burden on those who must comply with them. Thank you, and I look forward to answering your questions.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Thank you, Admiral.

Dr. Bamford, you are recognized.

Ms. BAMFORD. Good morning. Mr. Chairman and members of the subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to testify on H.R. 1171, the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendment of 2011.

Previous to my current position, I served as director of NOAA's marine debris program, and was involved in the inception in 2005. I look forward to contributing my experience on marine debris at today's hearing. To that end, I would like to share with you a story.

It was August 29, 2005, a day he will never forget. Returning from the Coast Guard office in New Orleans to his home in Baton Rouge, Charlie Henry, from NOAA's office of response and restoration, knew something big was coming. But he had no idea how just terrible the force would be. Born in Louisiana, and working for NOAA as a regional scientific support coordinator, Charlie knew from experience, and the reports coming through the weather service, that it was going to be a devastating storm. He feared the incredible crushing blow that would turn out to be the most destructive hurricane to hit the United States, Hurricane Katrina.

That part of the story might sound familiar to you. The part that may not know is the addition to the devastating injury to life on land, Hurricane Katrina also destroyed marine infrastructure on a wide scale, depositing enormous amounts of debris into the water, both on and off shore. This posed an even further—and many times unseen—threat to people, boats, navigation, and commercial activities.

Fishing is a major way of life in the Gulf Coast, where commercial fishing alone accounted for an estimated value of $700 million a year. As the Gulf began to rebuild their lives in the wake of the hurricane, they encounter dangerous debris in channels and offshore Gulf waters.

Following the storm, the Coast Guard, the Army Corps, and NOAA worked together to survey and clear debris from major navigational waterways, as mandated by existing requirements. Near shore areas outside of navigable waterways, however, were not required to be cleared. Yet many areas contain large amounts of debris in the fishing regions.

To help restore the area's fishing grounds and reduce the risk to public safety, in 2006 and 2007 Congress authorized supplemental funding to NOAA for surveying and mapping these areas that were impacted by Hurricane Katrina along the coast of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. It was because of the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act, which established a formal NOAA program in NOAA, that my team were able to fulfill the request of Congress for NOAA to carry out these tasks.

The opportunity to provide real assistance to the storm ravaged community meant a tremendous amount to my team, to my friend and colleague, Charlie Henry, and to me, as a fellow American. Working with Charlie and NOAA's office of coast survey, we surveyed over 1,570 square nautical miles, and identified over 7,000 marine debris hazards that were plotted on 137 marine debris maps. Some of the areas have not been surveyed since the 1940s, so NOAA was able to use these data to update nautical charts covering the regions, including over 200 dangerous to navigation.

The debris information was provided to the Coast Guard, to FEMA, States, in order to assist in debris assessments and removal projects. We also developed a public Web site that grew exponentially with visits from boaters and fishermen who downloaded the debris maps to avoid debris that could damage their boats and snag their gear.

In the end, NOAA provided a much-needed service to the Gulf Coast community in support of recovery, and this experience helped shape NOAA's marine debris efforts and subsequent disasters, such as response to tsunami in American Samoa in September of 2009, and the recent tsunami in Japan.

The story I recounted today is on an acute incident addressed by the marine debris program in NOAA. But it's those chronic debris issues that NOAA deals with on a regular basis that accounts for the majority of our efforts. The Marine Debris Act of 2005 authorized NOAA to establish a program to reduce and prevent the impacts of marine debris on the marine environment. The Reauthorization Amendment of 2011 provides a much stronger authority and clearer guidance to NOAA to address the impacts of various types of debris on a local, regional, national, and international scale.

The reauthorization amendment calls out NOAA's role in national regional coordination to assist the States, Indian tribes, and regional organizations to address marine debris that are particular to their areas. This strengthens the role of our regional coordination station around the country, including Hawaii, Alaska, the west, the east, the Gulf Coast, and the Great Lakes.

It also provides NOAA the authority to develop and implement strategies to promote international action to reduce the incidence of marine debris, such as supporting our efforts to assess debris generated from the Japanese tsunami.

Furthermore, the reauthorization directs NOAA to develop the needed tools and products to improve efforts to address marine debris, and make these available to researchers, the marine debris community, and the general public.

NOAA is committed to the goal of reducing the impacts of marine debris on our coasts and oceans, and I look forward to working with the subcommittee to achieve this outcome.

Thank you again for the invitation for me to discuss H.R. 1171, and the benefits of reauthorizing this NOAA program. I am happy to address any questions. Thank you.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Thank you very much. Admiral Currier and/or Salerno, these next couple of questions will be for you.

On the asset recapitalization programs, in spite of a series of acquisition reforms undertaken by the Coast Guard, there are still significant capability gaps and delays in acquisition projects. The Coast Guard has spent 10 years and more than $3.5 billion to acquire five National Security Cutters.

Congress agreed to the purchase of these vessels, based on a greatly enhanced geographic area the cutters could cover with two new classes of cutter boats, aerial unmanned vehicles, and a greater number of days at sea the cutters could achieve. GAO has recently found that the NSC provide no additional capabilities over the existing 40-year-plus-old cutters. The two new classes of cutters

have not been acquired, nor is there a plan to provide unmanned aerial vehicles. The NSC's vessels operate away from port only half of the year.

Why does the Service continue to face delays in selecting and acquiring cutter boats for the National Security Cutter, and when will these boats be acquired?

Admiral SALERNO. Sir, if you will permit us, we will maybe take different parts of that question and answer it. I would like to talk upfront just about the difference between the NSC and the 378, the High Endurance Cutters.

There is a substantial difference between the two vessels, sir. This program was designed to provide additional capability. That is why we only have 8 NSCs at the program of record, versus the 12 HECs. But just to give you a flavor, the National Security Cutter has the ability to land an H60 helicopter; the 378 does not. The NSC can accommodate 2 H65 helicopters; the 378 can only accommodate 1. NSC will have two Over-The-Horizon cutter boats versus one on the High Endurance Cutter. And it also has the skiff capabilities for classified material, which is not resident in the 378.

What we have noticed and observed in the deployment of *Bertholf*, the first operational NSC, she has been extremely effective, both in her counterdrug deployments—involved in two drug interdictions, highly effective in that role, using her cutter boats that are equipped with the vessel currently. And we also had experience in Alaska, where *Bertholf* was able to launch and recover aircraft in 20-foot seas, which is substantially greater than what is—the capabilities of the High Endurance Cutter, which is closer to 8-foot seas. So, we are seeing a dramatic increase in capability with this ship, by design.

Now, the cutter boats, as you point out, the ones that are on board right now will not be the ultimate boats that will be on board. There is a cutter boat OTH–IV, the operational requirements are being worked now. But we will replace the existing OTH boats with that OTH–IV, as well as a long-range interceptor. So, some of the boat issues are still playing out as separate acquisitions, but companion acquisitions to the ship acquisition.

Unmanned aerial systems, likewise. We continue to work very closely with the U.S. Navy on shipboard systems. I think you are aware we have been working with them on the fire scout. But we are also looking at other options, such as scanned eagle. And on land-based UAS, of course, we are working with CBP.

And then let me ask my colleague, Admiral Currier, to talk about some of the acquisition-specific aspects of your question.

Admiral CURRIER. Thank you, Admiral Salerno. Sir, we are in the middle of acquiring a complex system, based on the National Security Cutter, but it is a system. It's a system that encompasses fast response boats that prosecute the missions, meet the threats; a MDA package including unmanned aerial vehicles, eventually; manned helicopters, supplemented by manned and unmanned longer range, higher altitude surveillance, capped by a C4I system that actually allows us to not only capture the data, but prosecute the data to mission effect.

This is a complex acquisition, and we have had our issues beginning the National Security Cutter acquisitions, but I believe we're

on track, sir. As I said in my opening statement, we have one in service, the second one is about to go into service. The third one is about to be accepted by the Coast Guard. We are cutting steel on four, and we are about to award the contract on five.

We are now in an era of stable requirements, fixed-price contracts, where risks are identified and quantified and known upfront. We have a mature department whose acquisition oversight is enhancing our ability to acquire. And with the interest that—I thank you again for the interest of this committee—the input and support of this committee has also enhanced our ability to acquire these systems.

This complex acquisition can't be brought together in total harmony. There are design issues, there are schedule issues that we hit. However, as we bring the National Security Cutter on board, we are progressing unmanned aerial vehicles. We have integrated our manned helicopters with them.

We are in an aggressive program to buy two types of boats. And what we discovered, sir, is that, rather than buy an individual small boat for each class of cutter that we're buying, we now will buy only two types of small boats, a 7-meter fast prosecutor, and an 11-meter, longer range interceptor. The first one that was—the first long-range interceptor that was delivered could not do the job. The requirements were such that the state-of-the-art boat building did not get us there. Caused us some delays. We are back out with design on that boat now.

The shorter range, faster boat is—we are—we have awarded a contract to four companies to design prototypes, and we will downselect one and roll right into production next year. So I think we are on track here.

As far as the unmanned aerial vehicle goes, I was part of the group that made the decision to extract us from our original foray into that—the science of unmanned aerial vehicles. The Coast Guard is a midsized Federal agency with some distinct capabilities, but also some limitations. We do not have the ability to do the science required for integration of a rotary wing unmanned aerial vehicle. So we partnered with the Navy, and we are closely partnering with them today as they develop their solutions. They are integrating our requirements into them.

So, sir, I think this is a success story. It is not perfect, by a long shot. But we are on track today, as I said before, to a cost control environment where risks are predicted, and schedules are adhered to. Thank you, sir.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Well, you should by now know that this subcommittee are some of your biggest cheerleaders. But if a Member of Congress picks up this GAO report—if you put yourself in their shoes—this is not a good story.

And as we get into tighter and tighter and tighter appropriations and budget cycles, the stories that don't read well are the ones that become the easiest targets. I don't think I need to explain that further, of what's at stake here. A lot of us have worked long and hard to pump up the acquisition dollars and get us there.

So I have got some additional questions, but I want to now split it up a little bit and turn to Mr. Larsen.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. With regards to the headquarters relocation, the Homeland Security Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2012 didn't include funding for agencies within the Department, except the Coast Guard, to relocate to the new campus. And of course, we've got some issues with the lease. Can you cover for us what you are doing to try to decrease the difference in the lease cost between what your current lease costs are, and what your lease cost will be at St. Elizabeths?

Admiral CURRIER. Yes, sir. Thank you for that question.

First of all, let me back it up just a second, if I could, and just say I have walked the ground over there. We have looked very closely at the design. We have collaborated with both the Department of Homeland Security and the General Services Administration on the design of the campus. I think I can say with a pretty solid level of confidence that we will be better off there, in a consolidated environment.

There are deltas, there are gaps in the lease of what we are paying now to what we will be paying over there, and we are working closely with the Department, as we work our budget in 2013 and 2014 in the outyears to ensure that no Coast Guard operational capabilities are degraded because of the lease cost in moving to St. Elizabeths. So——

Mr. LARSEN. But how are you going to do that? I understand you're going to try to do that, but you're talking about a $42 million difference, is that right, per year?

Admiral CURRIER. Well, our projection at this point for fiscal year 2013, because we will have a shared GSA lease cost on the existing facility, and also accepting some level of occupancy at St. E's, plus the move costs, are about a $54 million tag over what we are paying now for steady-state occupancy of the two buildings we are in.

We are, as I said, working closely with the Department to find out where that fits in the Coast Guard top line, where that fits in the Department's top line. But they have—in close collaboration with the under secretary for management, with whom I work on a near-daily basis, we are looking for those solutions. I cannot give you the details of the solutions, it is still projected in the 2013 budget, which is under—being worked at this time. It is fully recognized, and our goal is that we will have no compromise in Coast Guard operations due to any increased lease cost for the new facility.

Mr. LARSEN. Dr. Bamford, with regards to the 1171, in your testimony you noted there is one additional change you suggested in your written statement, that Congress should revise the definition of the term "marine debris" to adopt the definition developed jointly between NOAA and the Coast Guard.

Are there any other changes you are suggesting to the bill? To the—through reauthorization are you suggesting other changes, beyond that one?

Ms. BAMFORD. No.

Mr. LARSEN. So that—so the main change would be the definition of "marine debris"?

Ms. BAMFORD. That is correct. We have—in the previous bill of 2005 we worked directly with the Coast Guard in developing a definition that has now been put into law. We had out for public com-

ment, so we support that previous definition that was worked in joint with the Coast Guard.

Mr. LARSEN. OK. NOAA awarded $4.6 million under the Recovery Act to the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Foundation. And that enabled the Foundation to remove over 3,900 derelict fishing nets. In fact, I was out a few weeks back on Alden Bank with some of the folks between Point Roberts and Lummi Island, pulling up gear. I was not personally pulling up gear. I have no intention of becoming a certified diver and going 50 feet down into the cold waters of Puget Sound. That's why you have people doing that.

But have all those funds been awarded under the grant, been obligated?

Ms. BAMFORD. Yes, sir. All the funds have been awarded, and it was an 18-month project. They put about—an estimated 20 full-time jobs were created through that project. It was—not everybody was a full-time employee, so about 50 individuals actually were brought into that, including divers, biologists, people working through and sieving through those nets. A number of different species—I think over 130,000 different species were captured in those nets, and they were fully removed, as you mentioned, from Puget Sound.

Mr. LARSEN. Yes, and were actually pulled up—unfortunately, pulled up dead female rock crab and female Dungeness crab that obviously were not able to go on and produce little baby crabs.

Ms. BAMFORD. Yes.

Mr. LARSEN. But some of the result of that is they seem to be thinking a growing abalone population up near Point Roberts, there is a benefit of it.

Back to the Coast Guard, if I might—Representative Young, do you have a comment on that?

Mr. YOUNG. I just couldn't understand what you were saying about a little crab, but——

Mr. LARSEN. You couldn't understand what I was saying?

[Laughter.]

Mr. LARSEN. Admiral Currier, are there other parity issues that are high priority for the Coast Guard, other than the parity issues with regards to the armed services?

Admiral CURRIER. Yes, sir. Parity issues—I would say one of our prime parity issues would be the Title 10, Title 14 utilization reserve, and to ensure that they are treated with parity, as far as paid benefits, and all the things that come with active duty service.

To give you an example, we had people sitting next to each other in Deepwater Horizon who were active under Title 10, other people activated under Title 14, and they were not receiving the same benefit package. So we really need to work on that, and we are looking for the committee's support in that.

Other areas of parity, we have made great strides in housing, but we have more progress that could be made in that area. Those are probably two main thrusts that we could look toward in the future. Of course our paid benefits for active duty are aligned with the defense authorization bill, appropriations bill, so that is pretty well taken care of. But there are some second-, third-tier, fourth-tier ef-

fects in medical, in housing, and those type areas that we would look for the committee's support in.

Mr. LARSEN. OK. Does the Coast Guard need some type of enhanced leasing authority, and has the Service looked into this issue?

Admiral CURRIER. I am sorry, sir, I didn't hear that.

Mr. LARSEN. Well, it is my understanding that some Federal agencies have authority to enter into long-term leases of properties under their control in order to generate income that could be used to supplement appropriations. Does the Coast Guard need some type of enhanced leasing authority like that, and has the Service looked into that issue?

Admiral CURRIER. Yes, sir. I think we could use—we would like to achieve parity with the Department of Defense, as far as terms of a lease go for excess Coast Guard property, or property that is not actively being used.

Mr. LARSEN. Yes.

Admiral CURRIER. I think that the terms of lease that we are constrained under are 5-year, which allows the commandant to lease for 5 years. But that is not viable with many commercial entities that would want to engage the Coast Guard in that type of lease.

I believe, sir, that the Department of Defense has authority for 20-year leases, and I think we would like to achieve that parity. It would put us in a better position.

Mr. LARSEN. OK. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Young, would you like to be recognized?

Mr. YOUNG. I would like to be recognized, Mr. Chairman. I do appreciate the Coast Guard, appreciate you having the hearings.

Vice Admiral, the budget justifications suggest the United States will take one of our polar ice breakers out of service, and return to contracting with other nations for ice breaking operations. This is problematic for me, for two reasons. First, we would be sending United States taxpayer money to pay a foreign entity for a job we would be capable of accomplishing if we would properly maintain our own ice-breaking fleet, and second is that we have tried this before only to find that foreign ice breakers were not reliable, and our own ice breakers were called out of moth balls to action.

Are there other basic service or activities in which the Coast Guard regularly contracts a foreign entity?

Admiral SALERNO. Sir, in that context, the only other example would be the break-out of Thule, Greenland, the DOD facility there, which is a Coast Guard responsibility, and we do have an agreement with the Canadian Government for that break-out. So they are, in fact, doing that on our behalf.

Mr. YOUNG. Well, let's go back to the ice breakers. Do you—who do we contract with the ice breakers, and do they have conflicting interests in the Arctic with the United States of America?

Admiral SALERNO. Sir, the Coast Guard does not directly contract with any foreign ice breakers. Foreign ice breakers have been used for the break-out of McMurdo Station in Antarctica. That contracting has been arranged through the National Science Foundation. In recent years they have used a Swedish ice breaker named

Oden for that purpose, with U.S. Coast Guard ice breakers on standby, you know, should there be a problem.

As you point out, sir, we currently have only one ice breaker that is fully operational. That is the cutter *Healey*. She is a medium ice breaker used predominantly for science activity in the Arctic. The two "Polars" are currently not operational. One is slated to be decommissioned, that's *Polar Sea*. And *Polar Star* is being refurbished to be put back into service in 2013, which will give her an extended life of about an additional 7 years.

That is the Nation's ice breaking capacity, sir. We are the only entity in the U.S. Government that operates ice breakers.

Mr. YOUNG. Well, see, this is my question. You are way behind in ice breaking. I happen to fund those three ice breakers we have, and they're old. They weren't maintained. You tried your best. I think we are re-engineering one of them, but by decommissioning—what's the budget cost to decommission the *Polar Star*?

Admiral CURRIER. Sir, we are going to decommission *Polar Star* and use some of the——

Mr. YOUNG. I said cost.

Admiral CURRIER. We're looking at—$5 million, sir, is the figure I have for decommissioning.

Mr. YOUNG. If you keep it in commission, what does it cost?

Admiral CURRIER. Well, sir, these ships, as you pointed out, are very difficult to maintain, and the service that they render is very hard on ships. We looked at a $62 million refurbishment of *Polar Star* to get her in a condition approaching what it needs to be for return to service. So that is currently what we have spent on *Polar Star*.

Mr. YOUNG. And that brings up my point of this whole questioning. You know, I have been in these hearings every time, and asked you why you don't lease some American ship builder to build a ship. Why do you have to own a breaker, when it costs you so much? And even when we recommission those ships, repair to any one of—they're very small ships.

Admiral CURRIER. Sir, the——

Mr. YOUNG. And we have a big responsibility in the Arctic. And I have got the numbers about leasing a vessel, the maintenance taken by the builder, and crewing of and manning of. And I do believe, if you want to look at the money—because you're not going to get the money to building a new Coast Guard cutter—I mean ice breaker for the Coast Guard, not on this present climate. And we need to be up there, because you know what's happening. All their—Iceland, Greenland, Canada, they're all being involved in the Arctic, and we are sitting on our thumbs.

So what is wrong with leasing a vessel?

Admiral SALERNO. Sir, if I could just take a stab at that——

Mr. YOUNG. Other than being—we have to own our own vessels, just like NOAA, which I never understood. Extremely expensive. Now, we're in a real crunch, money-wise. So we better wake up, because you ain't going to get them. And then the United States is behind us.

So, look at how the bottom dollar—go ahead, Admiral.

Admiral SALERNO. Yes, sir. Just a quick answer to your question. We have made a business case analysis of lease versus own in the

past that was done, I think, about 15 years ago. We are redoing that now. I don't have the answer for you yet. But I think that is an option that we need to consider as we go forward, and define what our needs are in the Arctic, given the changing conditions there.

Part of the high-latitude study is looking at our missions. We are taking that study, converting it into a mission analysis report, which will give greater definition to that, which will trigger another study called a mission needs study, which will look at various options as to how we accomplish those missions.

So, we didn't want to jump to the answer before we do the analysis. We know we will need new capability to operate in the arctic, as those conditions change, and there is more human activity there. As far as the solutions for how we achieve that, that is the subject of this ongoing study.

Mr. YOUNG. All I ask you—Mr. Chairman, if I may—all I ask you is keep an open mind and look at the bottom dollar, as far as maintenance. Having to put them back in recommission after 35 years, you turn them back, you're through with them, you've done your duty.

And thank you, by the way, for the high-latitude study, finally. I hope this next study doesn't take as long. So get back to us as soon as you can, because this is very, very important. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Thank you, Mr. Young. Mr. Cravaack?

Mr. CRAVAACK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thanks to the United States Coast Guard for all the men and women and all the sacrifices that you do on a daily basis that none of us really know about. So thank you to the sailors and airmen of the Coast Guard.

Admiral Currier, if you don't mind, sir, in regards to Coast Guard Authorization Act, you stated in your testimony that the Coast Guard initiated action of all 137 provisions of the act which service is responsible.

Prior to 2010 the authorization act of all licensed mariners would require a TWIC card. And section 809 of the 2010 Coast Guard Authorization Act now requires that only mariners who are allowed in secure spaces, unescorted access to secure area of a vessel, to obtain a TWIC. And thank you very much for that; that was great foresight.

Has section 809 been fully implemented?

Admiral SALERNO. Sir, it is not fully implemented, but we are working as rapidly as possible to fully implement that. We clearly understand the intent of the law. We are trying to work with our department on some harmonization of capturing biometric information, which we need for the license—not necessarily for the security background check, but for safety and suitability, which is a separate requirement for the license.

Previously, the TWIC satisfied that function. So we have to separate that out somehow. So we have a plan ahead which we are working the details with the Department on how to do that, and make it as simple and as painless as possible for the individual mariner.

Mr. CRAVAACK. Appreciate that. And as Chairman LoBiondo said, you have great friends here, and we want to help you, assist

you in your mission. So we will help you any way we can in that aspect, and also give—the needs of our individual districts met as well.

Admiral SALERNO. Yes, sir.

Mr. CRAVAACK. Admiral, also, since we're on this same page here, being a naval aviator, one of the things I am concerned about since 2008 we have had 15 operational casualties in the Coast Guard. Many of those were due to aviation accidents. And sir, I see you have a set of wings on your chest there, so I'm sure it is near and dear to your heart, as well.

What do you believe is the cause for this unusually high number of casualties over the past 2 years? And what are you doing to address the problem? I have a feeling I know the answer, but I just want to make sure.

Admiral SALERNO. Sir, we will both take a stab at that, because we both own part of that problem.

Sir, that was of great concern to the Coast Guard, to the commandant personally, and to all of the senior leadership of the Coast Guard. And Admiral Currier and I, in our respective roles, chartered a study to examine the reasons why. We call it the Aviation Safety Assessment Study. And it was a multifaceted look not only going—questioning our own workforce, but also benchmarking against external organizations on their safety programs.

And what we found is there was a—some issues with rate of change—cockpit configuration changes in a fairly short period of time, the addition of new missions, the expectation that pilots had to know more than maybe had been the case in the past. And, quite honestly, some complacency.

This was a joint effort between our two organizations. But as you point out, Admiral Currier is a senior aviator in the Coast Guard. So I would like to maybe ask him to comment on this, as well.

Mr. CRAVAACK. What did you fly, sir? I'm sorry, I don't have a background on you.

Admiral CURRIER. Oh, I have—everything we have, except for C–130s. Unfortunately, now I'm flying a desk. But I do keep the——

Mr. CRAVAACK. I feel your pain, sir.

Admiral CURRIER. Sir, thanks for that question. When we looked at 7 class A mishaps that—unfortunately, we lost 14 people in about a 30-month period, we looked at—we have a very sophisticated system of analysis, mishap analysis, as you, as a naval aviator, are well familiar.

What cooks out of an analysis like that are causal or contributing factors. Those are the two things we look for. When we scrubbed these seven mishaps, we found no intersection. So, statistically, one could say it is not enough of an anomaly to say it's significant, but we certainly thought it was significant, losing 14 people.

What we were able to do is put together a multidimensional study, of which we took personal ownership, and we surveyed our entire workforce, and we came up with about five environmental factors that contributed to a degradation in the safety posture of the Coast Guard aviation. I personally have visited about half of the air stations and another senior aviator has visited the other half, to have a sit-down, across-the-table, eyeball-to-eyeball talk with our aviators. And I think it has been very successful, to date.

We have looked introspectively, identified some areas we need to improve, and aggressively gotten after them. I think this is a success story, as well, sir.

Mr. CRAVAACK. Thank you very much, once again, what you do. And, Chairman, there will be a second round, sir? OK. Thank you very much, sir, and I yield back.

Mr. LOBIONDO. We will now turn to the gentleman from coastal Louisiana——

Mr. LANDRY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LOBIONDO. What do we say, Loosiana, here?

Mr. LANDRY. Loosiana. I'm sure you will help them if they can't understand me. Do a little interpretation for me.

Mr. LOBIONDO. We will have the translator.

[Laughter.]

Mr. LANDRY. Admirals, you know, I've got to tell you. The Coast Guard is one of the agencies in this Federal Government that I think operates the way agencies should. However, I am getting concerned that some of the other rotten apples in the bunch are starting to spoil you all. So I am going to be a little curt when it comes to these ice breakers that Congressman Young was speaking about.

It frustrates me when we have 8 of our 10 largest ports in this country under restrictions because we're not maintaining them, and we are $14 trillion in debt, and we spent all this money on stimulus that was supposed to stimulate jobs.

And it also frustrates me when we have equipment up in the Arctic which is—which I consider another frontier kind of like space. We have already shuttled the shuttle program. And we need access to that area.

Now, when I was in business—because I come from the business sector; I was never elected before I held this seat—I leased things. And I didn't have to study something to determine if I needed to lease it. It was simply a matter of discussing with the stakeholders—with either the ship builders, or those that would be interested in leasing it—and running the numbers to determine whether or not the leasing is more affordable than the purchasing.

And I can tell you that, when it comes to the Federal Government, I don't know anything that it can own that the private market can't provide more efficiently and more cost effective. So please look into this. I think it is something that we certainly need to do up there.

The second point which I came to discuss was the notice of arrival. You know, we discussed this several times with you all. We have exchanged a series of letters. We still—I think we are at an impasse now. I would like you to tell me—or one of you all to tell me—what you think that we could insert into this—into the Coast Guard reauthorization bill, which will help to break that impasse?

I mean why do we have to treat vessels that are leaving an American port, just traveling out to the OCS and coming back to an American port, the same way we treat a vessel coming from a foreign port, you know, crossing the OCS, and coming into the Gulf of Mexico? How can I help you so we can help the industry?

Admiral SALERNO. Sir, as far as the impasse goes, we actually do have a chartered effort undertaken with OMSA, the Offshore Marine Services Association, to look at the best way forward with this.

In the interim, that provision in the regulations is not being enforced. So currently, nobody is being harmed by this. Absolutely understand the concerns that you have raised in this and in other hearings, and in consultation with you, you know, just a staff-to-staff basis.

So, we will continue to work with OMSA, and we would like to develop recommendations through that effort. And then, sir, we would love to convey those recommendations to you, and——

Mr. LANDRY. Well, and I appreciate it. Thank you all for recognizing that, and thank you all for putting, basically, a moratorium on the regulation right now.

My concern is what happens when you guys leave, and maybe someone who is not as bright as you all takes your place, and decides to start enforcing it? And so, what I would like to do—again, I guess it's my business sense—when I see something that is broke, I just want to fix it. You know, is there something that we can do which helps give you—I guess to, I guess, clarify the issue, whether it be classified—because I know OMSA greatly appreciates your position currently, but they still believe that there is some sort of impasse in moving forward.

Admiral SALERNO. Well, sir, I think we need to stay in contact on this issue. I don't have the specific solution today, but I do offer myself to be available to you as we work through this problem.

Mr. LANDRY. Great. That will work. Just something that we can do. I just want to help. Thank you so much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Harris? Nothing? Mr. Larsen, do you have another round?

Mr. LARSEN. Dr. Bamford, you raised a concern in your statement that several States are finding abandoned vessels, bringing serious marine debris problems to the economic downturn, an issue that has been highlighted, in fact, in my district.

Do derelict vessels fall under the operational definition of "marine debris"?

Ms. BAMFORD. Yes, sir, they do.

Mr. LARSEN. They do?

Ms. BAMFORD. They do fall under that definition that currently is in promulgation.

Mr. LARSEN. OK. So then who is legally responsible for removing derelict vessels, once they become inoperable or an environmental threat?

Ms. BAMFORD. Usually it falls on the State. We recently had a—well, in 2009, due to continued questions and concerns about derelict vessels, due to the economic downturn, we saw an increase, or the States reported an increase.

We held a workshop with the Federal agencies, as well as invited the 30 coastal States, as well as the Great Lakes—Minnesota was there, as well—and we basically came to the resolution, based on laws and regulations, that most of the programs fall within the State requirements. So, States have programs that either are funded through State authorizations, or they develop programs to help in removal funds.

Where we come in is in helping multi-agency issues. For example, one State wants to develop a program, and they are looking for

information. We tried to provide the best available information for them to establish those programs.

Mr. LARSEN. OK. On a related topic, then, for Admiral Salerno, the Coast Guard is presently undertaking environmental remediation and cleanup activities to remove the derelict barge *Davy Crockett* from the Columbia River. Can you give us the status of that cleanup effort? And will the Coast Guard be pursuing reimbursement from the vessel's owner for these expenses?

Admiral SALERNO. Yes, sir. That is progressing. I know it is nearing completion, but I don't have the exact status. I can get that for you, for the record.

[The information follows:]

> Currently, $19.55 million has been committed to the case. The *Davy Crockett* response continues with effort principally surrounding the removal and cleaning of steel from the barge tanks. A Web site is being maintained by the Unified Command tracking the current progress of the removal, the site is available at: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/spills/incidents/DavyCrockett/DavyCrockett.html.
>
> Consistent with the Oil Pollution Act's "polluter pays" principle, the Coast Guard's National Pollution Fund Center recovers oil removal costs and damages from liable polluters and any guarantors to the greatest extent permitted by law. We have no comment on how liability for oil removal costs and damages may ultimately be enforced with respect to the *Davy Crockett* incident. These are matters within the enforcement discretion of the United States and pending further investigation and close coordination among affected agencies, including the Department of Justice.

But related to the broader question, this is an example where an abandoned vessel also poses an environmental threat. And when we have those types of situations, we can access the oil spill liability trust fund, open a Federal project to remove the pollution threat. In some cases, such as the *Davy Crockett* case, to remove the threat you really need to remove the vessel. So that is, functionally, what is happening there.

In all cases where we open up a Federal project under the fund, we do seek recovery of the costs, Federal costs, from the owner. That is fairly standard. And, of course, that always is somewhat dependent on the owner's ability to pay, but we do seek to recover.

Mr. LARSEN. So you are seeking cost recovery because this is a fund issue, oil spill fund——

Admiral SALERNO. Yes. All of the Federal expenditures—and also, if—I don't know all the details of the funding structure for this case——

Mr. LARSEN. Right, right.

Admiral SALERNO [continuing]. But we can hire State officials, as well, under the fund. Whatever expenditures are charged against the fund we do seek to recover from the responsible party.

Mr. LARSEN. OK, thank you. Admiral Salerno, with regard to fishing vessel examinations, the Coast Guard has estimated it will

need to hire no fewer than 60 full or part-time inspectors to conduct examinations of roughly 30,000 fishing vessels by the statutory deadline of October 2012.

How do you intend to address this requirement if the budget provides less funding for rulemaking? And does the Coast Guard intend to shift funds from other accounts in order to maintain its rulemaking program?

Admiral SALERNO. Sir, it will be challenging to complete all of the fishing vessel examinations with our existing active duty workforce. We would look to leverage some other opportunities to help accomplish the requirements for the examinations—for example, using our Coast Guard auxiliary, and also leveraging some third-party capability.

If there are—if that does not satisfy the requirement, if the workload is simply too great, then we would need to seek additional resources. But we are not at that stage yet. We do not plan to shift accounts, you know, specifically for that purpose. Essentially, the burden would fall on our cadre of marine inspectors that are currently in our workforce also performing other vessel inspection activities.

Mr. LARSEN. Would auxiliary or a third party have authority to ultimately sign off on the examination?

Admiral SALERNO. The—some of those details, sir, have to be worked out. We did have a legal matter which is being resolved regarding the use of the auxiliary, for example. As you know, they are not allowed to engage in law enforcement activity. So pending is a decision whether we can use them to sign off, or just simply as an assistant for a Coast Guard officer or petty officer.

But we—they at least provide a force that can be used to help streamline the inspection when we do that.

Mr. LARSEN. Should we expect that the Coast Guard is going to ask for a push back of the October 2012 timeline?

Admiral SALERNO. Sir, I don't know if we have asked for that. I would have to get back to you on that.

Mr. LARSEN. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. LOBIONDO. Mr. Cravaack?

Mr. CRAVAACK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Ms. Bamford, I have had the great opportunity, as a Reservist, to be attached to a command that was attached to Midway Island. And I have walked Midway Island's beaches. And I know that this is just—debris is not just a United States problem, it is a global problem, and it gets washed up on the beaches.

Can you tell me, in your analysis of the—I'm assuming you did an analysis of the debris that was on our beaches—how much is—you know, comes from the United States versus other countries?

Ms. BAMFORD. That's a great question, and one that is extremely hard to answer.

It depends. When you look at Midway, you're absolutely right. A lot of that debris is mixed, it's from international origin, as well as from U.S. The majority of what we see there is international in origin. It's a lot of fishing gear. We have actually found debris out there from World War II, material that we find from an old sailor's vest. And so you see that this stuff actually exists out in the ocean

for decades. It gets caught up in the convergence zones and then deposits itself on Midway.

When you actually look at around our coast here on the East Coast and West Coast, you see a lot more debris coming from the United States, obviously. It's a lot of waste, commercial waste, plastic debris, bags, things like that, that come from the U.S. And we see that after storms, coming out of storm drains. It is basically a waste management issue that we see here.

So, in order to tackle both of those, we have to look at marine debris as a ubiquitous problem. It knows no international or State boundaries. So we try to develop programs that address both domestic, as well as foreign, debris.

Mr. CRAVAACK. Ma'am, could you tell me, are the other international communities involved with this, as well? I mean is it just the United States bearing the brunt of all this?

Ms. BAMFORD. Yes, sir, they are. We just had an international conference. The Fifth International Marine Debris Conference was recently held in Hawaii. We had over—close to 400 participants from 30 international countries. And we just started those conversations again, because the previous international marine debris conference was a decade ago, 10 years ago, and NOAA, with UNEP, cosponsored this one we just had, and it really started those conversations in developing strategies on an international forum.

So, those engagements have been re-energized, and the outcome from that particular conference is continuing on today through strategies and programs that are being developed.

Mr. CRAVAACK. OK. Thank you, ma'am. The—according—my understanding is the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act authorized—was it $2 million—through fiscal year 2010 for the Coast Guard to enforce requirements which prohibits at-sea discharge of plastic trash and vessels.

Of the $2 million authorized, how much has been spent on this program? I don't know if the Coast Guard would answer that, or you would answer that, ma'am.

Ms. BAMFORD. I will defer to the Coast Guard.

Mr. CRAVAACK. Thank you, ma'am.

Admiral SALERNO. Sir, there was no money specifically appropriated to the Coast Guard for that. However, we have been working in very close partnership with NOAA on the marine debris program. And that has taken a number of different forms.

Probably the most dominant is our—we have blended in enforcement of the MARPOL Annex V into our normal ports that control examinations, so that 9,000 or so international vessels that call at the United States every year are examined by the Coast Guard for a number of things, including compliance with the international treaties on—to prevent discharge of garbage at sea.

We also make sure that any facility that receives an international vessel or domestic vessel has the capability to receive garbage, so that there is a place for it to go, other than into the ocean.

We have used our own ships as available. You know, for some of the activities that were mentioned by Congressman Farr—for example, out in the Pacific doing cleanups, working with NOAA, with the Army, recovering abandoned nets and so forth, and bringing

quite a bit of it back—and also we have engaged with our sea partners program, with the public, with school children, with recreational boaters, again, just sensitizing them to the need to put trash in its proper place.

Mr. CRAVAACK. Thank you, sir. Appreciate that.

Dr. Bamford, again, we have talked a little bit about the West Coast, we have talked about the Gulf. But near and dear to my heart is Great Lakes. Can you just comment a little bit about the Great Lakes?

Ms. BAMFORD. Yes, sir. The program recently expanded our regional coordinator into the Great Lakes. The majority of what we see up there in terms of a problem is a lot of the plastic debris, and the papers and the bags.

The ocean conservancy, we partner with them in the International Coastal Cleanup, and they have a very strong and a very good presence up in the Great Lakes.

The—also the issue of abandoned vessels is a problem outside navigable waterways, and we see that and we try to work with that in developing programs with the States. But we have, as a program, just recently—that was our latest coordinator, due to the need in the Great Lakes for a Federal presence to support the States in marine debris reduction efforts.

Mr. CRAVAACK. Thank you, Doctor. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. LOBIONDO. OK. Thank you. You still good, Andy? OK.

Thank you very much. Just one kind of last thing. Admiral Salerno, you noted that you had become the DCO and Admiral Currier has become the DCMS. Congratulations to both of you. Good luck.

The question is, will the Atlantic and Pacific area commanders remain in those positions, or are they slated to become deputy commandants or commanders of operation for the command and for force of command?

Admiral SALERNO. Sir, they will remain as Atlantic area and Pacific area, respectively.

Mr. LOBIONDO. OK. Admiral Currier, Admiral Salerno, Dr. Bamford, thank you very much for your testimony.

The committee meeting is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:17 a.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]

TESTIMONY OF
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DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR
OCEAN SERVICES AND COASTAL ZONE MANAGEMENT
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
HEARING ON
"HOW TO IMPROVE OPERATIONS AND IMPLEMENT EFFICIENCIES FOR THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD"
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JULY 26, 2011

Introduction

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for this opportunity to testify on H.R. 1171, the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011. My name is Holly Bamford, Deputy Assistant Administrator for the National Ocean Service at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) within the Department of Commerce. Previous to my current position, I served as the Division Chief and Director of the NOAA Marine Debris Program and was involved in its inception in 2005 and formal codification in 2006. I look forward to contributing my experience on the marine debris issue to today's hearing.

NOAA supports undertaking the activities detailed in the reauthorization language, which will codify efforts already underway within the NOAA Marine Debris Program and allow continued growth and progress in addressing the impacts of marine debris. Marine Debris is currently defined for the purpose of the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act as, "any persistent solid material that is manufactured or processed and directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, disposed of or abandoned into the marine environment or the Great Lakes." NOAA wrote this definition cooperatively with the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) as directed by the original Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act.

As the lead federal agency addressing marine debris and Chair of the Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee, NOAA continually works in partnership across federal agencies to ensure coordination in its national and international marine debris efforts, within existing bodies such as the Interagency Committee, and through the National Ocean Policy.

Marine Debris and Navigation Safety

For the interest of this Subcommittee, I would like to share critical information about the impacts marine debris can have to navigation safety, and why this is an important problem to address. Marine debris can present a navigation hazard and have impacts to vessels of any type. Ropes, plastics, and other objects can get entangled in boat propellers and cause operational problems

and large items such as lost containers can actually be collision dangers. Plastic bags can clog and block water intakes and are a common cause of burned-out water pumps in recreational crafts. Such incidents involve costly engine repairs and disablement. These dangerous and costly impacts are problems for both the recreational and commercial boating and shipping communities, and NOAA's Marine Debris Program is actively seeking partnerships within these communities to expand our area of knowledge and begin to proactively address the dangers.

These impacts to navigation and the economy are being investigated in a study conducted by the Marine Debris Program and the Hawaii longline fishing community since 2007. The study, utilizing the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service Observer Program in Hawaii to gain a better understanding of the overall impacts of derelict fishing gear to the Hawaii-based longline fishing industry, has produced some interesting results. During 125 separate vessel trips, observer vessels encountered over 34,000 pounds of marine debris, with an average of 287 pounds per encounter.

Abandoned and derelict vessels are another type of marine debris posing a threat to navigation safety in U.S. waters. Because older or inoperable vessels are expensive to remove and become even more costly the longer they are left in place, owners sometimes leave such vessels on the shoreline or sunk close to shore after removing identifying numbers. With the economic downturn, many states are finding abandoned vessels to be a serious marine debris problem.

To work toward remedies, the NOAA Marine Debris Program held a national abandoned and derelict vessel meeting in 2009, bringing together representatives from 17 coastal states, Minnesota, Puerto Rico and Rota Island to discuss ways to encourage proper disposal, utilize best removal techniques, and secure or create funding mechanisms and creation or revision of necessary state laws. Work continues on identifying how NOAA can help states address this debris type and its impacts.

Coastal storms and natural disasters are another source of marine debris creating navigation hazards on our inland and coastal waters. For example, during the 2005 hurricane season, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita inflicted severe damage on the Gulf of Mexico coastal region, and deposited extensive amounts of debris over various areas of the Gulf coast. Immediately following the storms, NOAA's Navigation Response Teams worked with the USCG, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other state and private sector partners to quickly survey and clear marine debris from shipping channels vital to the response and recovery effort. In addition, the amount of storm-generated marine debris outside the navigation channels was huge, posing a threat to safe vessel movement throughout Gulf coastal waters. Recognizing this, Congress provided Fiscal Year 2006 and 2007 supplemental funds to NOAA and USCG above the President's Request to survey and remove debris that posed a hazard to safe navigation and commerce in the coastal areas of Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

NOAA responded by surveying and mapping over 1,570 square nautical miles along all state waters of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Over 7,000 marine debris hazards were identified and plotted on marine debris maps. This information was provided to USCG, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the States in order to assist with cleanup efforts. Some of these areas had not been surveyed since the 1940s, so NOAA was able to also

use the data to update the nautical charts covering this region. This is a good example of NOAA's Integrated Ocean and Coastal Mapping effort, as directed in the Ocean and Coastal Mapping Integration Act, mapping once and using the data many times for more efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

To alert mariners to the marine debris hazards, NOAA worked with Sea Grant in each state to conduct a large outreach effort. Boaters and fishermen used the maps to avoid debris that could damage their boats and snag their gear. NOAA documented lessons learned from this collaborative effort with the States, Coast Guard, and FEMA, and drafted a Marine Debris Emergency Response Plan in readiness for a large dispersion of marine debris following a future major storm.

Through the National Ocean Policy's priority objective Water Quality and Sustainable Practices on Land goal, NOAA is assessing the efforts of federal agencies, particularly working with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, to identify further areas for cooperation and coordination to reduce, prevent, and remove marine debris.

NOAA Marine Debris Program in 2011

I would like to also highlight some of the more recent accomplishments of the NOAA Marine Debris Program and how these efforts relate to the new program components in the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011.

NOAA leads international collaboration
In March 2011, the NOAA Marine Debris Program hosted the Fifth International Marine Debris Conference in Hawaii, the first international marine debris conference held in over 10 years in Hawaii. Over 450 people from more than 30 countries attended, generating a new excitement to work together, combine knowledge and resources, and collaborate to comprehensively address marine debris. The major outcome of this conference was the Honolulu Strategy. This Strategy will be a major step forward for the international marine debris community, providing common terminology, outlining consistent ways of referring to goals and objectives, and establishing a mechanism for cooperative efforts. It also provides a comprehensive overview of the marine debris issue, sources, potential impacts, and prevention and reduction methods, so that any new efforts build on existing efforts to further evaluate the overall problem. This strategy is being drafted under the guidance of NOAA and the United Nations Environment Programme, with input from the conference participants and other interested parties. We expect the final Strategy to be made available by early fall.

Derelict fishing gear
The NOAA Marine Debris Program is planning to publish research results from projects funded over the past five years to study the impacts of derelict fishing gear used for crab, lobster, and fish in different parts of the country. These research results will provide statistics for fishery managers to understand and address, if necessary, the impacts of lost pots and traps to their resources. One such example comes from a joint NOAA-Virginia Institute of Marine Science study to assess impacts on the Virginia portion of the Chesapeake Bay, where the Governor of Virginia created a marine debris removal program in the Virginia Blue Crab Fishery Resource

Disaster Relief Plan. Out-of-work fishermen were hired to recover lost and abandoned crab pots. In the winters of 2008, 2009, and 2010, the fishermen removed over 28,000 derelict crab pots which contained more than 27,000 crabs, fish, and other animals. It is estimated that approximately 1.4 million market-sized crabs would have been lost to these derelict pots, negatively impacting this coastal economy.

A research project in Florida on derelict traps for spiny lobster has indicated a negative impact not only to the lobsters themselves, but to the surrounding habitat as well. Surveys utilized towed divers in all major areas of the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary (FKNMS) used as fishing grounds. The divers identified spiny lobster trap debris as the primary form of marine debris in FKNMS. Much of this debris was found in coral habitat, which suggests coral may act as a sink for trap debris. Derelict traps have the potential to move across the seafloor and cause abrasion and breakage of structural habitat. Over a one-year survey period, up to 25 percent reduction in live cover was a noted impact of derelict traps in FKNMS. Derelict traps continue to catch and kill lobster, though "ghost catch" of non-lobster species is minimal.

Additional derelict fishing gear research across the U.S. includes investigation of habitat recovery time after nets and crab pots are removed (about a year), the time it takes for bird species caught in nets to decay and be consumed (about 10 days), and the cost-benefit analysis of removing derelict crab pots. The conclusion from this research is that it makes economic sense to remove derelict pots.

Regional marine debris efforts
Since its inception in 2005, the Marine Debris Program has been actively involved in marine debris abatement on the West Coast, particularly in Alaska and Washington State. In the State of Alaska, the NOAA Marine Debris Program has been working to remove debris accumulations, research the impact of marine debris, and conduct outreach to prevent the introduction of new debris. The vast and diverse nature of the Alaskan shoreline, combined with the frequent high density of debris has led to the development and adaptation of innovative and specialized approaches to these goals in executing projects.

In Prince William Sound, NOAA has partnered with the Gulf of Alaska Keeper Foundation to remove debris from remote shorelines both inside the Sound and on the outer coast in order to prevent the re-mobilization of debris that can threaten marine species through entanglement and ingestion and help to restore valuable coastal habitat. In many areas, this removal has been paired with annual returns to the same beaches to monitor how much and how quickly debris accumulates. At Gore Point, an outer coast beach where currents and storms aggregate debris, over 20 tons of debris was cleaned from less than a mile of shoreline during an initial cleanup in 2007. Since then, high accumulation rates of debris have been observed, underscoring the need for continued vigilance.

In Washington State, the NOAA Marine Debris Program has supported the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative in its effort to survey for, assess the impact of, and remove derelict fishing gear in Puget Sound, resulting in the removal of thousands of derelict fishing nets and crab pots. Similarly, in 2007 NOAA supported the Stilaguamish Tribe of Indians in surveying for crab pots using side scan sonar, and removing derelict crab pots deeper than the

reach of divers with a remotely operated vehicle. In addition to navigation safety, removal of derelict fishing gear eliminates the risks of entanglement and trapping of marine species, reduces risks to human health, and promotes vital marine habitat recovery.

The NOAA Marine Debris Program is also partnering with the University of Washington - Tacoma to investigate the sources, prevalence and impacts of microplastics, an emerging marine debris challenge. Two workshops held in Tacoma in 2008 and 2010 brought together leading international scientists in diverse fields ranging from physical oceanography and ecology to emergency response and chemistry in an unprecedented international and coordinated focus on the microplastics issue.

Tools to Aid the Marine Debris Community

To be responsive to the needs of marine debris practitioners, NOAA is developing tools to aid in the dissemination of information and best practices on marine debris identification and removal. One such effort is the development of standardized, scientifically rigorous monitoring protocols for marine debris, which will be available for worldwide use. With limited resources available in the international marine debris community, the NOAA Marine Debris Program wants to reduce duplication of effort to make sure that all resources can be used to move forward to arrest and reverse the impacts of marine debris.

Finally, a new tool that the marine debris community has requested is the NOAA Marine Debris Information Clearinghouse, as required by both the original Marine Debris Act and included in the Reauthorization Amendments Act of 2011. The Clearinghouse is the result of significant scoping to ensure the best product and resource prioritization to address current gaps in marine debris information as well as fill future needs. NOAA gathered input through workshops and interviews with stakeholders throughout the marine debris community, including federal and state government partners and the many non-governmental organizations active in the field. The Marine Debris Program then organized and translated these inputs into a set of specifications that synthesizes and prioritizes features in a cohesive design. To evaluate the accuracy and utility of the design, staff conducted follow-up interviews with representative users from each sector of the marine debris community. In parallel, NOAA staff worked to evaluate potential development partners, striving to balance the forward looking approach the design required with the cost-effectiveness and stability that spatial data projects demand. When unveiled, the Clearinghouse will be a one-stop shop for marine debris practitioners to learn about current and ongoing projects, tools, products, and related marine debris-related publications. This site, targeted specifically to marine debris practitioners, will augment the existing NOAA Marine Debris Program public website for general audiences, which currently receives approximately 300,000 visits annually.

Partnerships to Address Marine Debris

Working with non-governmental organizations, regional organizations, local, state and federal governments, and international organizations is a priority for the NOAA Marine Debris Program. NOAA's marine debris regional coordinators extensively cover the marine debris issue in the Pacific Islands, West Coast, Alaska, Great Lakes, East Coast, and Gulf of Mexico. While these coordinators focus on the local, state, and regional issues as a part of the national program, they are also able to bring in lessons learned and make connections across the country and the world.

NOAA has held lead roles in developing marine debris plans for Hawaii and the West Coast Governors Agreement, planned multiple workshops for New England, the Great Lakes, Alaska, and Hawaii, and worked on specific projects throughout all regions. NOAA continues to work with partners throughout the country to develop and test innovative and cost-effective methods of detection and removal of marine debris, and to engage the public and industry, including shippers and fishermen, and the recreational community on marine debris.

One shining example of such a strategic partnership is the Fishing for Energy program. Launched in 2008 through a partnership among Covanta Energy Corporation, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, NOAA, and Schnitzer Steel Industries, Inc., the partnership works closely with state and local agencies, community and fishing groups, and local ports to install bins at convenient and strategic locations into which fishermen can deposit fishing gear. When these bins fill up, the gear is collected and transported to a nearby Schnitzer Steel facility where the metal (e.g., crab pots, gear rigging) is pulled for recycling, and rope or nets are sheared for easier disposal. Then the waste is brought to the nearest Covanta Energy-from-Waste facility, where the gear is converted into clean, renewable electricity for local communities. This partnership is designed to give fishermen a place to dispose of derelict gear they come across while on the water, and ease the burden of high costs associated with disposing of old fishing gear into landfills. The program also began providing grant awards for community groups to proactively remove derelict fishing gear in 2009. These investments, which are estimated to remove over 92 tons in the first year, provide the fishing community with a means to become more actively involved in addressing marine debris issues. Since 2008, 500 tons of gear has been collected through the Fishing for Energy program at 24 ports across the country.

Another example of a highly successful partnership is the Marine Debris Program's ongoing work with the University of Georgia. Under this partnership, NOAA has partnered with the Southeast Marine Debris Initiative (SEA-MDI), a consortium of marine debris stakeholders and decision makers from across Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, to develop tools for the public and share best practices and resources to address the impacts of marine debris off the Atlantic coast. The SEA-MDI partnership launched the first tool developed for a wide audience, the Marine Debris Tracker, in March 2011. This tool is a smartphone application that allows anyone to track marine debris worldwide and then post the locations to an online map and database.

In addition to new partners, NOAA continues to collaborate with long-time NOAA partners in new ways. For example, the Ocean Conservancy and NOAA are in the early phases of developing online resources to educate a larger audience on marine debris and its impacts. Additionally, NOAA has supported the Alice Ferguson Foundation's (AFF) annual Trash Summit, which brings together local components that are needed to prevent marine debris, including local lawmakers, enforcement officers, non-governmental organizations, and companies.

H.R. 1171

NOAA supports undertaking the activities detailed in the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011, and can accomplish them within the amounts requested for the program in

the FY 2012 President's Budget. The bill will codify efforts already underway within the NOAA Marine Debris Program and allow continued growth and progress in addressing the impacts of marine debris. The reauthorization lists program components which closely parallel the primary effort areas of the Marine Debris Program, including investigation and assessment; prevention, reduction, and removal; interagency, regional, and national coordination; development of tools and products; and international cooperation.

The bill also gives NOAA the mandate to hold a Global Marine Debris Coordination Conference not less than every four years, which would enable us to continue the success of the Fifth International Marine Debris Conference in March of 2011. Marine debris knows no international boundaries; convening regularly with our international partners will increase collaborative opportunities for dealing with existing and emerging marine debris issues such as the residual effects of the April 2011 Japanese earthquake and tsunami.

H.R. 1171 emphasizes the importance of education and outreach, two critical components of the NOAA Marine Debris Program. Reducing marine debris requires that boaters, fishermen, industry, academia, non-governmental organizations, and the general public have the knowledge and training to change their behaviors.

H.R. 1171 will also support priority objectives under the National Ocean Policy, including, Water Quality and Sustainable Practices on Land, to address marine debris and its impacts.

One recommendation NOAA would make on H.R. 1171 is to revise the definition of marine debris to better align with the jointly developed NOAA-USCG definition now in regulation, per direction from the original Marine Debris Act.

Conclusion

Marine debris is a problem we can prevent. The NOAA Marine Debris Program will continue to pursue on-the-ground research, prevention, and reduction of marine debris nationwide. While the problem of marine debris has existed for decades, there is still much to learn as we work to address the impacts of marine debris to the environment and marine species. Additional research is needed to understand and assess the impacts of marine debris on diverse species and habitats as well as the economic impacts and the dangers to navigation posed by marine debris. NOAA is committed to the goal of eradicating marine debris from our oceans, and looks forward to working with the Subcommittee to achieve this outcome.

Thank you again for inviting me to discuss H.R. 1171 and the benefits of reauthorizing this NOAA program. NOAA would welcome the chance to work further with you to advance this legislation.

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TESTIMONY OF
VICE ADMIRAL JOHN CURRIER, DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR MISSION SUPPORT, AND VICE ADMIRAL BRIAN SALERNO, DEPUTY COMMANDANT FOR OPERATIONS, BEFORE THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION
JULY 26, 2011

INTRODUCTION

Chairman LoBiondo, Ranking Member Larsen, distinguished Members of the Subcommittee: Good morning. We are honored to speak to you today and thank you for the continuing support you have shown to the men and women of the United States Coast Guard.

We are here today to discuss the Coast Guard's proposed legislative program.

We wish to acknowledge the Subcommittee's past and ongoing efforts to ensure statutory parity between the Coast Guard and the other military services. Three of the four parity provisions of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 – § 221 (Coast Guard housing), § 222 (Child development services), and § 223 (Chaplain activity expense) – directly enhance the quality of life of Service personnel. Mr. Chairman, while the fiscal impact of your personal intervention with regard to Coast Guard housing can be measured by the potential for more than $30 million in deposits into the Housing Fund for the benefit of military housing, the positive effect on morale cannot be overstated. On behalf of the Coast Guard's officer and enlisted corps, thank you.

COAST GUARD LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The Coast Guard's legislative program, which, consists of 13 offices and staffs at Coast Guard Headquarters and 20 legal offices at major Coast Guard units nationwide, provides legal advice to Coast Guard personnel with regard to the execution of Coast Guard missions, operations, and activities, including legal advice on the implementation and execution of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010. In addition, the Office, working with other Coast Guard directorates, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Administration, develops the Coast Guard's legislative agenda.

COAST GUARD AUTHORIZATION ACT OF 2010

The implementation of the Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2010 continues on track. Overall—

- The Coast Guard has initiated action on all 137 provisions of the Act for which the Service responsible.

- The Coast Guard has identified 29 provisions that require the promulgation of regulations. The Service will incorporate 16 into existing rulemaking projects—an action that will expedite implementation. The Service is actively working on the remaining 13 projects, and the implementation of section 809 concerning transportation security cards on vessels is proceeding at a faster pace than the others. This activity is conducted under the auspices of the Coast Guard Marine Safety and Security Council, the advisory body for all Coast Guard regulatory initiatives.

In May, the Coast Guard briefed Subcommittee staff on the Service's progress. Of the several provisions of particular interest to this Subcommittee, we are pleased to note that—

- Rulemaking will not be required with regard to § 602 (Vessel size limits). The National Vessel Data Center has implemented procedures to process applications for the limited population of fishing vessels that will be impacted by this section.

- The Service will not initiate a rulemaking unique to the requirements of § 612 (Oil fuel tank protection) because they are captured within the current MARPOL Annex I rulemaking effort.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee today. And, on behalf of the Coast Guard, we thank the Subcommittee for its past and continued support of the Service and its members. We are happy to answer any questions that you may have.

TESTIMONY OF

THE HONORABLE SAM FARR
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
THE 17TH DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

BEFORE THE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND MARITIME TRANSPORTATION

JULY 26, 2011

Thank you Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen for holding a hearing on the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011 (H.R. 1171), which I introduced in March. This bill currently has bipartisan support from 24 cosponsors, and I appreciate the willingness of the Committee to draw awareness to the critical and challenging issue of marine debris.

Mr. Chairman, our oceans are in trouble. The marine environment is in the worst shape in the history of mankind, and we, as humans, have treated the oceans as a dumping ground for our waste. Over 14 billion pounds of trash end up in the ocean and soiling our beaches every year, and this trash, which is formally referred to as marine debris, includes everything from single-use plastic shopping bags, to derelict fishing gear, bottle caps, cigarette butts, plastic bottles, lighters, and more. Ultimately, this trash hampers tourism and harms commercial fisheries, having devastating impacts on the U.S. economy.

Every year, over 77.8 million Americans from all over the country visit a beach, and this tourism is a driver for economic growth. Many businesses rely solely on tourism for their success, and an increase in the prevalence of marine debris can have long-lasting economic impacts. For example, in the summers of 1988 and 1989, New Jersey and New York experienced beach closures when medical marine debris washed ashore. Estimates suggest that the total loss in tourism revenues was as much as $3.6 billion. While our country has made significant progress in preventing events such as this, keeping our beaches clean still requires significant resources. In the city of Long Beach, California, $17 million is spent each year in an effort to maintain tourism by keeping the beaches trash free.

In addition to these economic impacts, this trash is taking a toll on the marine environment. Marine debris impacts 267 marine species through ingestion or entanglement, and estimates suggest that up to 100,000 marine mammals are killed each year by marine debris. Marine debris also poses an ongoing threat to endangered species and recovery efforts. For example, in the last 20 years, there have been over 200 observed incidents of Hawaiian monk seal entanglement in marine debris. For a species with less than 1,000 individuals remaining, the threat posed by marine debris could be the deciding factor for the future of this species.

In 2006, Congress recognized the pervasive problem of marine debris by passing the original Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act of 2006. This law established programs within the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to address the problem of marine debris. Specifically, the law laid the foundation for partnerships between USCG, NOAA, and other federal agencies with the creation of the Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee (IMDCC). The IMDCC facilitates joint-agency efforts to increase awareness and improve compliance amongst various stakeholders, including the maritime industry and boaters, in order to reduce and prevent marine debris. The interagency coordination and information sharing resulting from the existing law has helped both NOAA and USCG to be more effective and efficient in their missions, including USCG's mandate to enforce MARPOL Annex V, an international agreement which prohibits dumping of plastics at sea. Additionally, existing law has helped ensure coordination of marine debris activities between Federal agencies, ultimately preventing duplication of efforts. Agencies in the IMDCC are now more easily able to coordinate research priorities, monitoring techniques, education programs, and regulatory actions, allowing USCG and NOAA to do more with limited resources.

For example, the joint partnership between NOAA and USCG resulted in a widely successful marine debris mapping project in the Gulf of Mexico. Every year, marine debris causes up to $792 million in damages to commercial and recreational vessels. Following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in the Gulf of Mexico, the increased abundance of submerged marine debris posed a significant navigational hazard to boaters and fishermen. To minimize this risk, USCG partnered with NOAA, the Gulf of Mexico states, and several private nautical mapping companies to survey over 1,500 square nautical miles along the Gulf Coast. Through this effort, over 7,000 submerged items were located and mapped in offshore fishing and shrimping grounds. The fishermen and boaters were then provided maps and information and outreach materials in order to help them reduce collisions, thus reducing the number of incidents that would require additional USCG response and resources. This initiative clearly exemplifies that this multi-agency approach provided a more comprehensive, successful solution than what could have been accomplished by a single agency working alone.

In addition to interagency partnerships, NOAA and USCG have been particularly successful in forming public-private partnerships with local communities, academic institutions, the private sector, and the fishing industry to find wide-ranging solutions to prevent and reduce marine debris. These partnerships are critical to leveraging private funds and result in more resourceful and successful federal programs. The reauthorization explicitly calls for the further establishment of public-private partnerships that will assist in the implementation of marine prevention and reduction initiatives.

Public-private partnerships have been particularly successful in addressing and reducing the impacts of derelict fishing gear. Derelict fishing gear, which is gear either lost, or disposed of, at sea, can devastate the value of marine fisheries, as it continues to catch and kill target species in a process called ghost fishing. It is estimated that over $250 million in marketable U.S. lobster is lost each year in derelict fishing gear. Additionally, in the Puget Sound, a single derelict gillnet will catch and kill 4,368 crabs over its lifetime. In a time where our fishermen are already facing economic challenges, losses of this magnitude are simply unacceptable, and

a public-private partnership called "Fishing for Energy" was formed to help minimize these economic losses.

The "Fishing for Energy" partnership originated in the Northwest Hawaiian Islands as a partnership between NOAA, USCG, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and two private companies called Schnitzer Steel and Covanta Energy. In this partnership, NOAA and USCG work to remove derelict fishing gear from the marine environment, and then the gear is returned to Schnizter Steel and Covanta Energy, where the gear is recycled to produce electricity. In the Northwest Hawaiian Islands, over 1.4 million pounds of derelict gear has been recycled, producing enough electricity to power 260 homes for an entire year. Additionally, the "Fishing for Energy" partnership has installed recycling bins in 25 ports across the country, which have accumulated over 1 million pounds of old fishing gear. These recycling bins provide fishermen an alternative to costly landfill disposal of old fishing gear, as well as an incentive to retrieve any derelict gear they might come across while on the water. This public-private multi-agency partnership provides another example of how the existing law has successfully addressed the problem of marine debris, and the reauthorization will allow for these partnerships to be strengthened.

In addition to partnerships that increase efficiency, Federal resources are further amplified as existing law requires that all NOAA Marine Debris Program grant funding is matched by at least 50%. From 2005-2009, NOAA's program has funded 86 projects with only $6.3 million, and these funds have leveraged an additional $7.9 million in non-Federal funds. One project of noteworthy significance that is partially funded through the existing law is the annual International Coastal Cleanup. This is the world's largest single day marine debris cleanup event, and in 2010, the United States had over 240,000 volunteers who cleaned up 4.5 million pounds of trash from our coastlines and marine environment. This bottom up effort engages local communities all across the country, and the vast participation in this cleanup event indicates that public support for marine debris efforts is widespread. The reauthorization encourages these efforts to continue and maintains the matching requirement in order to augment Federal funds.

In summary, existing law has allowed for the formation of successful partnerships both within the Federal government and with the Federal government and the private sector. These partnerships have successfully leveraged the resources and capacity of USCG and NOAA, enabling these agencies to make significant strides in tackling the pervasive challenge of marine debris, with very limited resources. We must act now to ensure that these partnerships are not only maintained, but strengthened, and H.R. 1171 is the necessary vehicle to achieve this. It is through these partnerships that our country can most efficiently and effectively address the impacts of ocean trash on marine ecosystems, coastal economies, and navigation safety. Thank you again for this hearing and I look forward to working with this subcommittee to move this legislation forward.

AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
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112TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 1171

To reauthorize and amend the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 17, 2011

Mr. FARR (for himself, Mr. YOUNG of Alaska, Mr. ROHRABACHER, Ms. BORDALLO, Mrs. CHRISTENSEN, and Mr. PIERLUISI) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

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A BILL

To reauthorize and amend the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011".

SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

Section 2 of the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act (33 U.S.C. 1951) is amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 2. PURPOSES.

"The purposes of this Act are—

"(1) to address the adverse impacts of marine debris to the marine environment, navigation safety, and the economy through investigation and source identification, assessment, reduction, removal, and prevention;

"(2) to continue the Interagency Marine Debris Coordinating Committee; and

"(3) to develop and maintain the Federal marine debris information clearinghouse.".

SEC. 3. NOAA MARINE DEBRIS PROGRAM.

Section 3 of the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act (33 U.S.C. 1952) is amended by striking so much as precedes subsection (c) and inserting the following:

"SEC. 3. NOAA MARINE DEBRIS PROGRAM.

"(a) ESTABLISHMENT OF PROGRAM.—There is established, within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a Marine Debris Program to—

"(1) investigate, identify sources of, assess, reduce, remove, and prevent the occurrence of marine debris; and

"(2) address, and where practicable prevent, adverse impacts of marine debris on the marine environment, navigation safety, and the economy.

"(b) PROGRAM COMPONENTS.—

"(1) INVESTIGATIONS AND ASSESSMENT.—The Administrator shall, in consultation with relevant Federal agencies, undertake marine debris investigation and assessment efforts, with a focus on marine debris posing a threat to the marine environment, navigation safety, and the economy, including—

"(A) investigation, analysis, and assessment of derelict fishing gear;

"(B) investigation, analysis, and assessment of plastics, as pertains to the health of the marine environment;

"(C) the establishment of a process for maintaining an inventory of marine debris types and their impacts found in the navigable waters of the United States and the United States exclusive economic zone, including impacts on the marine environment, navigation safety, and the economy; and

"(D) measures to identify the source, location, and projected movement of marine debris within United States navigable waters, the United States exclusive economic zone, and the high seas, including the use of oceanographic, atmospheric, satellite, and remote sensing data.

"(2) PREVENT, REDUCE, AND REMOVE OCCURRENCE AND IMPACTS.—The Administrator shall improve efforts to prevent, reduce, and remove marine debris, including activities to address the adverse impacts of derelict fishing gear, including—

"(A) working with other Federal agencies to address land-based sources of marine debris;

"(B) developing fishing gear modifications or alternatives to conventional fishing gear posing a threat to the marine environment;

"(C) developing effective nonregulatory measures and incentives to cooperatively reduce the volume of lost and discarded fishing gear and to aid in its recovery; and

"(D) developing and implementing strategies, methods, priorities, and a plan for preventing and removing marine debris in or likely to enter United States navigable waters or the United States exclusive economic zone, includ-

ing development of local or regional protocols for removal of derelict fishing gear and other marine debris.

"(3) NATIONAL AND REGIONAL COORDINATION.—The Administrator shall undertake national and regional coordination to assist States, Indian tribes, and regional organizations to address marine debris issues that are particular to their areas, including—

"(A) facilitating information exchange within and among States and Indian tribes on issues relating to marine debris investigation and assessment, prevention, reduction, and removal activities; and

"(B) serving as an expert resource to State, tribal, and local governments, nongovernment organizations, fishing communities, industry, and other entities with an interest in marine debris.

"(4) DEVELOPMENT OF TOOLS AND PRODUCTS.—The Administrator shall develop tools and products to improve efforts to address marine debris, and make these available to researchers, the marine debris community, and the general public. The tools and products may include—

"(A) best practices;

"(B) protocols for monitoring marine debris;

"(C) technology; and

"(D) reporting methods.

"(5) INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION.—The Administrator, acting through the Marine Debris Program, may lead the development and implementation of a strategy, in coordination with other relevant programs, that may be pursued by the United States with other nations and in appropriate international and regional forums, to promote international action to reduce the incidence of marine debris, including—

"(A) the adoption of effective marine debris prevention and removal measures in international and regional agreements, including fisheries agreements and maritime agreements;

"(B) the development of standardized national reporting and information guidelines that will assist in improving information collection and identification and monitoring of marine debris;

"(C) consistent with the information clearinghouse established under section 6, the pro-

motion of 'best practices to address marine debris';

"(D) the establishment of public-private partnerships and funding sources for pilot programs that will assist in implementation of marine debris prevention and removal measures in international agreements and guidelines;

"(E) when appropriate, provision of assistance to the responsible Federal agency in bilateral and multilateral efforts to effectively address marine debris prevention; and

"(F) actions to implement the relevant recommendations of the National Research Council report entitled 'Tackling Marine Debris in the 21st Century' and dated 2008.".

SEC. 4. GLOBAL MARINE DEBRIS COORDINATION CONFERENCE.

The Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act (33 U.S.C. 1951 et seq.) is amended by redesignating sections 7, 8, and 9 in order as sections 8, 9, and 10, and by inserting after section 6 the following new section:

"SEC. 7. GLOBAL MARINE DEBRIS COORDINATION CONFERENCE.

"The Administrator, in coordination with representatives of the domestic and nondomestic marine debris community, shall host a Global Marine Debris Coordination Conference not less often than every four years, beginning in 2015. The Conference shall be developed with a steering committee composed of domestic and nondomestic marine debris experts, led by the Administrator.".

SEC. 5. DEFINITION OF MARINE DEBRIS.

Section 8 of the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act, as redesignated by section 4 of this Act, is amended—

(1) by moving paragraph (3) (relating to the definition of "United States exclusive economic zone") to appear as the last paragraph of the section;

(2) by moving paragraph (6) (relating to the definition of "territorial sea") to appear immediately before such last paragraph, as so moved;

(3) by amending the paragraphs after paragraph (2) as paragraphs (4) through (10);

(4) by redesignating paragraph (2) as paragraph (3);

(5) by inserting after paragraph (1) the following new paragraph:

"(2) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term 'Indian tribe' has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b)."; and

(6) by inserting after paragraph (3), as so redesignated, the following new paragraph:

"(4) MARINE DEBRIS.—The term 'marine debris' means any man-made object that—

"(A) intentionally or unintentionally, is discarded, disposed of, or abandoned; and

"(B) enters the coastal or marine environment—

"(i) directly from a vessel, a facility, or shore; or

"(ii) indirectly, by being carried via a river, stream, or storm drain or by other means.".

SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

Section 10 of the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act, as redesignated by section 4 of this Act, is amended by striking "for each fiscal year 2006 through 2010" and inserting "for each of fiscal years 2012 through 2016".

○

SAM FARR
17TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION, AND RELATED AGENCIES
HOMELAND SECURITY
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS' AFFAIRS, AND RELATED AGENCIES

CO-CHAIR, CONGRESSIONAL ORGANIC CAUCUS

CO-CHAIR, CONGRESSIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM CAUCUS

CO-CHAIR, HOUSE OCEANS CAUCUS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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July 26, 2011

Chairman Frank LoBiondo
Subcommittee on Coast Guard &
Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Rick Larsen
Subcommittee on Coast Guard &
Maritime Transportation
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen,

Please find enclosed letters of support for H.R. 1171, the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011, from the following organizations and businesses:

1) Aleut Community of St. Paul Island
2) Algalita Marine Research Foundation
3) CARIS USA
4) Consortium for Ocean Leadership
5) Covanta Energy
6) Icicle Seafoods, Inc.
7) Island Charters
8) Jersey Coast Anglers Association
9) Marine Conservation Alliance
10) Marine Conservation Institute
11) Method Products
12) Monterey Bay Aquarium
13) Moss Landing Harbor District
14) National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
15) Northwest Straits Commission
16) Natural Resources Defense Council
17) Ocean Champions
18) Ocean Conservancy
19) Project AWARE
20) Science Applications International Corporation
21) Save Our Shores
22) Schnitzer Steel Industries, Inc.
23) San Diego CoastKeeper
24) Surfrider Foundation
25) TerraSond Limited
26) Western Alaska Community Development Association

I respectfully ask that these support letters be submitted into the Congressional Record.

Sincerely,

Sam Farr
Member of Congress

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

ALEUT COMMUNITY OF ST. PAUL TRIBAL GOVERNMENT

2050 VENIA MINOR ROAD
PO BOX 86
ST. PAUL ISLAND, ALASKA 99660



Ecosystem Conservation Office

July 25, 2011

Frank LoBiondo (R-NJ)
Chair of the T&I CG Subcommittee
2427 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-3002

Dear Mr. LoBiondo:

The Ecosystem Conservation Office (ECO) of the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island, Tribal Government is writing this letter in support of the NOAA Marine Debris Program. The ECO has been receiving funding from this program for marine debris cleanup efforts on St. Paul Island, Alaska through the Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation (MCAF) since 2005. Through this funding, the ECO has successfully removed a total of 115,000 to 135,000 pounds of marine debris from St. Paul's shorelines since 2006.

On St. Paul Island, one of the most prominent local impacts of marine debris is the entanglement of northern fur seals (*Callorhinus ursinus)* in pieces of net, plastic bands and other synthetic debris. Funding through the Marine Debris Program allows us to protect our environment and the wildlife our community members depend on for their livelihood. Our location in the middle of the Bering Sea, where some of the largest fisheries in the World occur, keeps us susceptible to marine debris accumulation on our shorelines.

We are requesting that Congress maintain the existing funding level for the Marine Debris Program. This program will continue to be needed as long as fishing and ocean transportation are in existence. Thank you for considering our letter of support for this critical national program.

Sincerely,

Pamela M. Lestenkof

Pamela M. Lestenkof
Program Manager

Cc. Congressman Young
John Mica (R-FL)
Nick Rahall (D-WV)

907-546-3200 (MAIN) • 907-546-3241 (VOICE) • 907-546-3254 (FAX)
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July 22, 2011

Chairman Lobiondo
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Larsen
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Lobiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

Algalita Marine Research Foundation wishes to express its gratitude to you and the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation for including H.R. 1171, The Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments, in today's hearing. The threat of plastic marine debris is a major challenge for our time affecting each one of us. The oceans are struggling to maintain balance. Unless we pull together to address this threat to the natural life cycle, the oceans will no longer be able to support life as we know it.

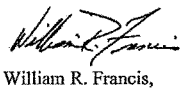
Marine debris, or ocean trash, includes everyday items from bottles, plastic bags, and lighters to lost fishing gear, tires and even shipping containers lost at sea. All of these items and many more have significant impacts on wildlife, ecosystems and economies. The original Marine Debris Act passed with bipartisan support and established programs within NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard to help assess, determine and prevent the impacts of marine debris. These programs are essential both to our understanding of the economic and ecological impacts of ocean trash, in particular, plastic, and to minimizing these impacts through education and prevention. The U.S. Coast Guard enforces international and U.S. regulations on trash disposal at sea, as well as portside disposal facilities, to prevent trash from entering the marine environment. Through their "Sea Partners" campaign, the U.S. Coast Guard works to educate the public on the impacts and prevention of marine debris through conferences, public education classes and vessel safety checks.

In March 2011, NOAA hosted an international conference that brought the world's leading experts together to identify solutions and secure commitments for a future of trash free seas. Algalita Marine Research Foundation participated in the Conference, sharing numerous presentations and plastic marine pollution data from 10 years worth of studies in the North Pacific Ocean, as well as observations from expeditions to the other four major world gyres in 2010 and 2011.

Plastic marine pollution is not going away until we address solutions and prevention. We support the concept of continued research, prevention and education, reaffirming a commitment to address marine debris. As scientific advocates, it is Algalita Marine Research Foundations' fervent wish that agencies will work in concert with us as we continue to gather important data relevant to plastic marine

pollution throughout the world. We support collaborative efforts to achieve the goals set forth in this legislation.

Sincerely,



William R. Francis,
President, Board of Directors

caris
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United States
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Information Contained Herein is Confidential and Proprietary

July 25, 2011

Chairman Lobiondo
Subcommittee on Coast Guard &
Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Lobiondo,

CARIS USA is supporting the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) with software that is used extensively throughout the organization in hydrographic surveying data processing and production. CARIS products have been used in Katrina relief, daily surveying and processing activities aboard all NOAA ships, in delivery of data that leads into production of nautical charts, and in data management of the high volume of bathymetric and hydrographic data that is collected by NOAA and National Geophysical Data Center.

CARIS USA would like to register our support for H.R. 1171, a bill to reauthorize and Amend the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act.

The marine survey work that the NOAA Office of Coast Survey does for the nation is the key component for safety of navigation, coastal zone management, Marine Spatial Planning, Integrated Ocean Observing System, and marine debris prevention and reduction. Collecting and creating the Marine Spatial Data Infrastructure is the first step to understanding, controlling, and unleashing the power that is the ocean.

Specifically, marine debris is a global problem affecting everything from the environment to the economy; from fishing to navigation; to human health and safety. In particular the NOAA Marine Debris Program serves as a centralized marine debris capability within the NOAA in order to coordinate, strengthen, and increase the visibility of marine debris issues and efforts within the agency, its partners, and the public. This Program is undertaking a national and international effort focusing on identifying, reducing, and preventing debris in the marine environment.

Paul R. Cooper
Vice President
CARIS USA

Commercial-in-Confidence

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July 25, 2011

Ranking Member Larsen
Subcommittee on Coast Guard &
Maritime Transportation
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

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Paul R. Cooper
Vice President
CARIS USA

Commercial-in-Confidence

July 25, 2011

Representative Frank LoBiondo
Chairman
House Coast Guard and
Maritime Transportation
Subcommittee
2427 Rayburn House Office
Building
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
House Coast Guard and
Maritime Transportation
Subcommittee
108 Cannon House Office
Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership and our 99 member institutions, I would like to provide support for the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011. Ocean Leadership recognizes the significant threat ocean trash, or marine debris, poses to the health of our oceans, marine wildlife, and our economy. Therefore, we support research efforts to understand and mitigate the impacts of marine debris on the oceans, such as those outlined in H.R. 1171. It is for that reason that we are writing you today in support of this bill.

We believe in the need for sound research as the foundation for developing and implementing policies. Therefore, we especially support the efforts in this legislation to fund research, investigate sources, and understand impacts of marine debris on ecosystems and public health. We also endorse the provisions in this legislation that promote coordination and transparency of information to ensure the best possible implementation plans are being developed.

Since its initial passage, the Marine Debris Act has done great work through NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard to assess and mitigate the amount and impacts of marine debris. This legislation works to continue those efforts by updating the original measure to meet current demands, and we support in particular those components that address the need for continued research. We would like to thank the Subcommittee for holding this hearing on this important legislation and for their thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert B. Gagosian
President and CEO
Consortium for Ocean Leadership

DISCOVERY • UNDERSTANDING • ACTION

CONSORTIUM FOR
Ocean Leadership

MEMBERS
Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences
Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
College of William and Mary
Columbia University (Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory)
East Carolina University
Florida State University
Florida Straits Consortium
Gulf of Mexico Consortium
Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution
Louisiana State University
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Mississippi State University
Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute
Monterey Bay/Central California Consortium
North Carolina State University
Old Dominion University
Oregon State University
Pennsylvania State University
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Skidaway Institute of Oceanography
South Carolina Marine Science Consortium
Stanford University
Stony Brook University
Texas A&M University
University of Alaska Fairbanks
University of California, San Diego (Scripps)
University of Connecticut
University of Delaware
University of Florida
University of Hawaii
University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
University of Massachusetts
University of Miami
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COVANTA
ENERGY
for a cleaner world

Paula Soos
Vice President
Government Relations

Covanta Energy Corporation
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Morristown, NJ 07960
Tel 862 345 5348

July 22, 2011

Chairman Lobiondo
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Larsen
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Covanta Energy is an internationally recognized owner and operator of Energy-from-Waste and other renewable energy projects. In 2008 the company was the recipient of the Energy Innovator Award from the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy. Covanta's 40 U.S. Energy-from-Waste facilities (44 worldwide) provide communities with an environmentally sound solution to their solid waste disposal needs by using municipal solid waste to generate clean, renewable energy.

In addition to processing municipal solid waste into clean renewable electricity, Covanta Energy has been involved with the successful Fishing for Energy Partnership since its inception, providing financial and human resources for a project that we feel is of great value to our ocean environment as well as commercial fishermen and the environment generally. We are particularly proud of the role that this program plays in supporting jobs in the fishing industry in coastal communities. Covanta is one of four partners, the others being the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), NOAA, and Schnitzer Steel Industries, Inc.

Since 2008, the partnership has continually expanded the Fishing for Energy program by installing bins at convenient and strategic locations into which commercial fishermen can deposit unwanted fishing gear. While New England has a plethora of ports, new ports are constantly being added and include locations in Hawaii, California, Oregon, New York, New Jersey, Virginia and most recently Florida. Other ports in the Great Lakes and WA are also under investigation.

Under the program, the collected, derelict gear is first transported to a nearby Schnitzer Steel facility where the metal (e.g., crab pots, gear rigging) is pulled for recycling and rope or nets are sheared for easier handling. From there it is brought to the closest Covanta Energy-from-Waste (EfW) facility, where the gear is converted into clean, renewable electricity for local communities. In some cases, the shearing step does not take place due to the constituency of the gear and the fact that Covanta can remove and recycle metals both pre and post combustion. In fact, Covanta recycles over 400,000 tons of metal each year through its US facilities.

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The Fishing for Energy partnership eases the burden of high cost -- both financial and environmental -- associated with disposing of old fishing gear into landfills, or worse, leaving it in the ocean. During these tough economic times, eliminating some of the costs for these fishermen helps keep their operations viable. Since 2008, well over one million pounds of gear has been collected through the Fishing for Energy program at 24 ports across the country. Through this successful program, one ton of marine debris is converted into enough power for the average American homes for 25 days.

This Partnership is a live example of how public, private and not-for-profit organizations can cooperate and achieve great environmental benefits and should be a model for other opportunities. For these reasons, Covanta supports H.R. 1171 to reauthorize the Marine Debris Research, Prevention and Reduction Act and urges continuation of this important program.

Sincerely,

Paula Soos, Vice President, Government Relations



ICICLE.

July 21, 2011

The Honorable Frank LoBiondo, Chair
T & I USCG Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
2427 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act

Dear Congressman LoBiondo,

We support the reauthorization of the "Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act". The Marine Debris Act of 2006 enabled groups throughout the U.S. to address the problem of marine debris.

Icicle Seafoods, Inc. is a member of the Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation (MCAF), a non-profit organization comprised of fishermen, seafood processors, communities and support industries operating in Alaska and the North Pacific. MCAF operates an award winning nationally recognized marine debris program involved in clean-up projects, data collection, and prevent/education efforts. MCAF has partnered with many tribal entities, communities, other non-profits, businesses, and volunteers since 2003 to address marine debris. The Marine Debris Act of 2006 provided critical funding and guidance to the MCAF program.

The need to combat marine debris has not diminished. As a result of the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami, we can likely expect an increase in marine debris for the west coast of the U.S., including Alaska. Marine debris impacts the seafood, transportation and tourism industries, and our local communities. It also seriously endangers our fish and wildlife resources. There is still much work to be done. It is critical to the program's success to maintain level funding.

We urge you to support the reauthorization of the "Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act".



ICICLE

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
ICICLE SEAFOODS, INC.

Kris Norosz
Government Affairs

cc: Congressman John Mica
Congressman Nick Rahall
Congressman Don Young
Congressman Rick Larsen
Congressman Jay Inslee
Congressman Doc Hastings
Congressman Norm Dicks
Congressman Jim McDermott
Congressman Dave Reichert
Congressman Adam Smith

PETERSBURG FISHERIES
A DIVISION OF ICICLE SEAFOODS, INC.
P.O. Box 1147 • Petersburg, AK 99833 • Tel: 907-772-4294 • Fax: 907-772-4472

July 21, 2011

Dear Mr. LoBiondo,

As a recipient of funding to clean the beaches outside of Craig, Alaska, I cannot express how important continued funding is for the health of our ocean, beaches, marine mammals and fishermen. Many animals, such as sea turtles, seabirds, and marine mammals, have been known to ingest marine debris, which may lead to loss of nutrition, internal injury, intestinal blockage, starvation and even death.

Our project in Craig has been extremely successful. In 2010, A total of 31 individuals (14 paid laborers and 17 volunteers) worked a total of 944 hours to collect, sort, recycle, reuse and dispose of 20,389 pounds (9.2 mt) of marine debris from 20,673 yards of beach. This works out to 0.98 lbs per yard, or 98 lbs collected per 100 yards of beach. In the prior year, 110 lbs were collected per 100 yards of beach.

Marine debris is a problem that continues to grow and by supporting the continued funding for a program that has proven to be beneficial and is an existing program, not a new one we can continue our successful removal of marine debris.

Sincerely,

Kathy Peavey
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peavey@aptalaska.net

JERSEY COAST ANGLERS ASSOCIATION
Working For the Saltwater Resource & Marine Anglers
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July 26, 2011

Chairman Lobiondo
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Congressman Larsen
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2163 Rayburn House Office Bldg.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of the 75 fishing clubs represented by Jersey Coast Anglers Association and our associate members, we would like thank you and the other members of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation for including H.R. 1171, The Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments in today's hearing. The pervasive threat of ocean trash, or marine debris, is a significant challenge for our time that affects us all. We need solutions so that future generations have clean waterways and a healthy ocean to enjoy, and one of these solutions is HR 1171. This legislation will help to address and minimize the adverse impacts of ocean trash and we strongly support this bill.

Marine debris, or ocean trash, includes everyday items from bottles, plastic bags, and lighters to lost fishing gear, tires and even shipping containers lost at sea. All of these items and many more have significant impacts on wildlife, ecosystems and economies. For instance, derelict fishing gear can have detrimental impacts of the value of recreational and commercial fisheries. For example, it is estimated that over $250 million in marketable lobster is lost each year in derelict fishing gear. Additionally studies in the Puget Sound area indicate that a single derelict gill net is estimated to catch and kill 4,368 crabs over its lifetime. Furthermore, derelict gear poses as a navigational hazard and causes up to $792 million in damages to vessels every year. In a time where our fishermen are facing serious challenges due to requirements under the Magnuson Stevens Act, something must be done to prevent these unnecessary economic losses.

In the recreational sector, we have been collecting unwanted fishing line. For example, at New Jersey's Island Beach State Park, every station where 4 wheel drive recreational fishing

vehicles fill their tires with air, there is a container for old fishing line. This keeps the line from entangling birds and getting caught in boat's propulsion systems.

In an effort to address the economic impacts of derelict fishing gear, the NOAA Marine Debris Program has partnered with the private sector in a partnership called "Fishing for Energy." This partnership provides recycling bins in fishing ports where fishermen can dispose of old gear at no cost. To date, this partnership has collected over 1,000,000 pounds of gear from 24 ports across the continental U.S. and was honored with the Coastal America Partnership Award for its action-oriented, results-driven collaboration process dedicated to restoring and preserving coastal ecosystems. In New Jersey, the Fishing for Energy Partnership has installed a recycling bin at the port in Cape May, and this site has collected over 48 tons of gear. Not only does this partnership provide fishermen another option besides costly landfill disposal, it incentivizes the fishermen to collect any derelict gear they come across while on the water. Ultimately, this partnership benefits the fishermen, our economy, and our local marine environment. If this Act fails to get reauthorized, this beneficial initiative will be at risk.

The problem of marine debris is growing everyday. This legislation will ensure that NOAA can continue its crucial work to reduce the prevalence and impacts of derelict fishing gear. HR 1171 reaffirms NOAA's commitment to address marine debris and will streamline the program to avoid duplicating with the efforts of other agencies. Thank you again for hearing this bill, and we urge the committee to continue to advance this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Thomas Fote
Legislative Chairman
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Toms River, NJ 08753
Phone 732-270-9102
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Cell 732-598-7669
tfote@jcaa.org

Marine Conservation Alliance

promoting sustainable fisheries to feed the world

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Seattle, WA 98199

Juneau Office
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(907) 523-0731 phone
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Adak Community Development Corporation
Alaska Crab Coalition
Alaska Longline Co.
Alaska Whitefish Trawlers Association
Alaska Groundfish Data Bank
Alaska Pacific Seafoods
Alaska Scallop Association
Aleutian Pribilof Island Community Development Association
Arctic Storm Management Group
Bristol Bay Economic Development Corporation
Central Bering Sea Fishermen's Association
City of Unalaska
Coastal Villages Region Fund
Glacier Fish Company
Groundfish Forum
High Seas Catchers Cooperative
Icicle Seafoods
Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation
United Catcher Boats
U.S. Seafoods
Waterfront Associates
Western Alaska Fisheries, Inc.
Yukon Delta Fisheries Development Association

July 21, 2011

The Honorable Frank LoBiondo, Chair
T & I USCG Subcommittee
U.S. House of Representatives
2427 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act

Dear Congressman LoBiondo,

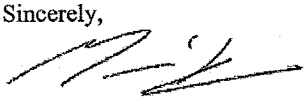
We are writing to express our support for the reauthorization of the "Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act". Marine debris is a growing problem that affects our coastal habitat, coastal and ocean wildlife, and the industries that rely upon clean and healthy coasts and oceans. Reauthorization of this act can dually support jobs and a healthy environment.

The Marine Conservation Alliance (MCA) is a non-profit organization whose members include fishermen, processors, and communities of the North Pacific and Bering Sea who recognize the need for stewardship of the oceans. To that end, we established the Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation (MCAF) to address the problem of marine debris; a program that has been nationally recognized for removing over 2 million pounds of marine debris from Alaska's shores. We believe that marine debris is harmful for several reasons, including; it is a hazard to navigation, an eyesore for tour operators and their customers, and can be fatal to fish and wildlife through ingestion and entanglement. The effects of debris on wildlife can negatively impact the seafood industry through fishery closures that could have been prevented with proactive removal efforts.

Now more than ever marine debris is a problem we must address. Debris from the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami will soon reach the coastline of U.S. Pacific coastal states. We therefore respectfully ask that you support the reauthorization of the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act.

Please contact us or visit the MCAF website www.mcafoundation.org for more information about marine debris and the removal program.

Sincerely,



Merrick Burden
Executive Director

cc:

Congressman John Mica
Congressman Nick Rahall
Congressman Don Young
Congressman Rick Larsen
Congresswoman Jamie Herrera Beutler
Congressman Jay Inslee
Congressman Doc Hastings
Congressman Norm Dicks
Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Congressman Jim McDermott
Congressman Dave Reichert
Congressman Adam Smith



William Chandler, Vice-President for Government Affairs July 21, 2011

The Honorable Frank Lobiondo
Chairman
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
U.S. House of Representatives
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
U.S. House of Representatives
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Lobiondo and Ranking Member Larsen,

Marine Conservation Institute supports the reauthorization of the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act (H.R. 1171), and respectfully recommends the subcommittee report the bill.

Marine debris has become one of the most widespread pollution problems affecting the world's oceans and waterways. Research has proven that debris has serious effects on the marine environment, marine wildlife, the economy, and human health and safety. Marine debris harms marine and coastal communities by damaging marine habitat like coral reefs; transporting non-native and invasive species to new habitats; causing navigational hazards and vessel damage; and harming and entangling wildlife. The number of marine debris-related entanglement deaths of endangered and threatened seals, sea turtles, and seabirds continues to grow.

The *Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act* of 2006 established a national program led by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in partnership with the United States Coast Guard (USCG), to identify, assess, reduce and prevent marine debris and its effect on the marine environment. Since the creation of the program, NOAA and USCG have accomplished a tremendous amount. Recently the NOAA program has funded eight community-based marine debris removal grants engaging the fishing community; funded research to better understand the extent and impacts of certain derelict fishing gear; supported key education and outreach programs aimed at behavior modification to prevent marine debris from entering the environment; expanded the Fishing for Energy Partnership (which burns unwanted nets to generate power); and developed beach and surface water marine debris monitoring protocols.

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USCG continues monitoring and enforcing compliance under MARPOL Annex V and the Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships. In addition, USCG has partnered primarily with NOAA to remove an estimated 667 metric tons (mt) of marine debris from the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands (NWHI) where marine debris continues to kill endangered Hawaiian monk seals and seabirds. More debris generated by the 2011 tsunami in Japan is predicted to arrive in Hawaii within 18 months.

The proposed reauthorization reflects important improvements to the existing legislation. The changes in the legislation will:

- Allow NOAA to more effectively address the issue of marine debris. The reauthorization clarifies that the intent of the program is to address the adverse impacts of marine debris (not just study marine debris) to the marine environment, navigation safety and the economy through research, source identification, assessment, reduction, removal and prevention.

- Prioritize research and assessment on derelict fishing gear and plastics pertaining to the health of the marine environment, navigation safety, and economy.

- Highlight NOAA's role in national and regional coordination in order to strengthen partnerships between NOAA and federal, state, local, regional, and tribal efforts to address marine debris.

- Require NOAA to continue its international leadership on the worldwide problem.

Please act this Congress to ensure that the National Marine Debris Program is able to continue with the vitally important activities that are safeguarding our oceans and waterways.

Sincerely,

W J Chandler

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methodhome.com

July 25, 2011

The Honorable Frank LoBiondo
The Honorable Rick Larsen
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
507 Ford HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf Method Products, we would like to thank you and the other members of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation for your work on H.R. 1171, The Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments.

Method is the pioneer of premium environmentally-conscious and design-driven home care, fabric care and personal care products. At Method we believe in "reincarnation", that materials can be reused throughout the industrial lifecycle. Take for example our 100% post-consumer recycled PET bottles. Bottles that are made entirely from plastic collected in municipal recycling facilities that can be recycled again, and again, and again ...

Curbing the expansion of ocean trash, or marine debris, is a significant challenge for our time. If left unchecked, it will affect us all. We need solutions so that future generations have clean waterways and a healthy ocean to enjoy, and one of these solutions is HR 1171. This legislation will help to address and minimize the adverse impacts of ocean trash. Method strongly supports this bill.

The trash gyres which stretch across our oceans for hundreds if not thousands of miles are made up of everyday household items: from bottles, to plastic bags, to lighters, and also include fishing gear, tires and even shipping containers lost at sea. All of these items and many more have significant impacts on wildlife, ecosystems and economies. Municipalities pay millions of dollars per year to clean beaches and keep trash out of waterways. For example, in Long Beach, California alone, raking machines used to remove ocean trash from beaches cost $18 million to install and maintain.

The original Marine Debris Act passed with bipartisan support and established programs within NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard to help assess, determine and prevent the impacts of marine debris. These programs are essential both to our understanding of the economic and ecological impacts of ocean trash and to minimizing these impacts through prevention, education and removal. The U.S. Coast Guard enforces international and US regulations on trash disposal at sea, as well as

method.

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portside disposal facilities to prevent trash from entering the marine environment. Through their "Sea Partners" campaign, the U.S. Coast Guard works to educate the public on the impacts and prevention of marine debris through conferences, public education classes and vessel safety checks. NOAA has developed innovative partnerships to create energy from discarded fishing gear, educated thousands of people with its Marine Debris 101 resources, and hosted an international conference that brought the world's leading experts together to identify solutions and secure commitments for a future of trash free seas.

The problem of ocean trash is growing every day, this legislation will ensure that NOAA can continue its crucial work of research, prevention and education on ocean trash. HR 1171 reaffirms NOAA's commitment to address marine debris and will streamline the program to avoid duplicating the efforts of other agencies. Thank you again for holding a hearing on this bill. We urge the committee to continue to advance this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Adam Lowry
Co-Founder and Chief Greenskeeper

MONTEREY BAY AQUARIUM®

July 21, 2011

Chairman Frank LoBiondo
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Rick Larsen
U.S. House of Representatives
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support for H.R. 1171, the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, I am writing to express support for H.R. 1171, the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011. The health of our oceans continues to be threatened by the persistent influx of marine debris, ranging from lost fishing gear to plastic bags and other trash items from land-based sources. H.R. 1171 would help address this threat by re-authorizing NOAA's Marine Debris Program to conduct vital research, cleanup efforts, and public education on marine debris.

In recent years, researchers have documented vast amounts of plastics throughout the Pacific Ocean and have observed animals consuming these plastics and dying of starvation, as the plastics replace food and water in their stomachs. One study of seabirds off the coast of California found that 71 percent of the northern fulmars sampled contained plastic in their stomachs[1]. At the same time, debris items such as lost fishing gear can entangle animals and fishing boats alike, leading to hundreds of millions of dollars in damages. Trash in our oceans and on our beaches also detracts from tourism, costing coastal cities and counties millions of dollars each year.

To date the NOAA Marine Debris Program has made significant progress cleaning up marine debris, most notably through the funding of International Coastal Cleanup Day. In 2010 this event involved over 241,000 participants collecting over 4.5 million pounds of trash from beaches, parks, and wharfs around the country. We need to continue these efforts to clean up our beaches and oceans and educate the public on the impacts of marine debris.

We look forward to working with you on this bill and continuing the important task of educating our communities about the harms of marine debris. Thank you for recognizing the importance of a healthy environment and working to conserve our oceans for future generations.

Sincerely,

Michael Sutton
Vice President & Director
Center for the Future of the Oceans

[1] Nevins, H., D. Hyrenbach, C. Keiper, J. Stock, M. Hester, and K. Harvey. 2005. Seabirds as indicators of plastic pollution in the North Pacific. PAPER for Plastic Debris Rivers to the Sea Conference 2005. http://www.oikonos.org/papers/Nevins_etal_2005.pdf.

MOSS LANDING HARBOR DISTRICT

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Linda G. McIntyre, Esq.

July 26, 2011

Chairman Lobiondo
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Larsen
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of the thousands of boaters and fishermen who access the Moss Landing Harbor, we would like thank you and the other members of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation for including H.R. 1171, The Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments, in today's hearing. The pervasive threat of ocean trash, or marine debris, is a significant challenge for our time that affects us all. We need solutions so that future generations will have clean waterways and a healthy ocean to enjoy, and one of these solutions is HR 1171. This legislation will help to address the adverse impacts of ocean trash and we strongly support this bill.

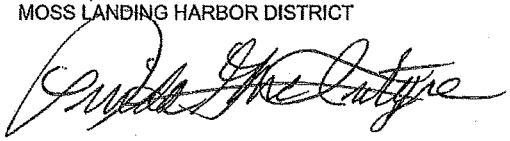
Marine debris, or ocean trash, includes everyday items from bottles, plastic bags, and lighters to lost fishing gear, tires and even shipping containers lost at sea. All of these items and many more have significant impacts on wildlife, ecosystems and economies. For instance, lost fishing gear can have detrimental impacts on the value of commercial fisheries. For example, it is estimated that over $250 million in marketable lobster is lost each year in derelict fishing gear. Furthermore, derelict gear is also a navigational hazard and causes up to $792 million in damages to vessels every year. At a time where our fishermen are facing serious challenges due to requirements under the Magnuson Stevens Act, something must be done to prevent these unnecessary economic losses.

In an effort to address the economic impacts of old, unusable fishing gear, the NOAA Marine Debris Program has partnered with the private sector in a partnership called "Fishing for Energy." This partnership provides recycling bins in fishing ports where fishermen can dispose of old gear at no cost. During a recent "Fishing for Energy" collection event in Moss Landing Harbor, of which I am the Harbor Master, over 2.5 tons of old gear was collected. Not only does this partnership offer fishermen another option besides costly landfill disposal, it also provides a convenient means of discarding derelict fishing gear fishermen may come across and retrieve while on the water. Ultimately, this partnership benefits the fishermen, our economy, and our local marine environment. If this Act is not reauthorized, this beneficial initiative will be at risk.

The problem of marine debris continues to grow. This legislation will ensure that NOAA can maintain and enhance its crucial efforts to reduce the prevalence and impacts of derelict fishing gear. HR 1171 reaffirms NOAA's commitment to address marine debris and will streamline the program to avoid duplicating the efforts of other agencies.

Thank you again for hearing this Bill. We urge the Committee to continue to advance this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,
MOSS LANDING HARBOR DISTRICT



Linda G. McIntyre
General Manager

LGM/mdm

C: Board of Harbor Commissioners
Honorable Sam Farr, 17th Congressional District

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July 21, 2011

The Honorable Frank LoBiondo
Chairman
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

For over a decade, the National Marine Sanctuary Foundation has strengthened America's National Marine Sanctuary System, and sanctuary communities from coast to coast, by promoting science-based public policies such as those embodied in the Marine Debris, Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act. We strongly support the objectives of the original Marine Debris Act and thank you for including HR 1171, the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011, in next week's hearing before the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation.

As you know, marine debris is a pervasive problem: an estimated 6.4 million tons of trash enters the ocean each year. Marine debris includes everyday items from bottles, plastic bags, and lighters to derelict fishing gear, tires, and even shipping containers lost at sea. All of these items have impacts on ocean wildlife, marine ecosystems, and the coastal communities and economies they support. In Puget Sound alone, each year derelict crab pots kill Dungeness crab worth approximately $1.2 million. Municipalities pay millions of dollars a year to clean beaches and keep trash out of waterways, and NOAA's National Marine Sanctuary and Marine Debris programs are important partners in efforts to keep our most economically and ecologically vital ocean places healthy, resilient, and free of marine debris for the enjoyment of current and future generations of Americans.

From coast to coast, national marine sanctuaries are on the front lines of the fight against marine debris. In Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary off the Massachusetts coast, volunteers have collected over 100,000 pounds of derelict fishing gear, and annual shoreline cleanups in Washington's Olympic Coast National Marine Sanctuary have removed up to 30,000 pounds of debris each year. Perhaps most striking is the fact that approximately 57 tons of ocean trash enters the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument – recognized for its natural and cultural heritage by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and home to some of the most pristine coral reef ecosystems remaining on the planet – each year.

The Marine Debris Act provides authorities that complement National Marine Sanctuaries Act authorities, and NOAA's Marine Debris program offers essential support for the removal of ocean trash from sanctuaries across the nation. HR 1171 will reaffirm Congress' intention that NOAA address the challenges presented by trash in the ocean and ensure that the agency can continue to research, prevent, and remove marine debris. We encourage the Subcommittee to favorably report HR 1171, the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011.

Thank you for your support and for all you do to improve the health of our ocean,

Jay Elliott Berman
Director of Government Relations



NORTHWEST STRAITS
marine conservation initiative

Congressman Frank LoBiondo, Chairman
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Congressman Rick Larsen, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

July 21, 2011

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of the Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative, we would like thank you and the other members of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation for including H.R. 1171, The Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments, in today's hearing. The pervasive threat of ocean trash, or marine debris, is a significant economic, ecological and safety challenge for our nation. We need solutions so that future generations have clean waterways and a healthy ocean to enjoy, and one of these solutions is HR 1171. This legislation will help to address and minimize the adverse impacts of ocean trash and we strongly support this bill.

The Northwest Straits Initiative provided input and support for the original Marine Debris Act in 2005 and has since partnered with the NOAA Marine Debris Program to develop a nationally-recognized program addressing the problem of derelict fishing gear in Puget Sound and Washington state. The NOAA Marine Debris Program has supported and assisted us every step of the way with both funding and critical technical expertise.

County Marine Resource Committees
Clallam
Island
Jefferson
San Juan
Skagit
Snohomish
Whatcom
In Cooperation with Participating Tribal Co-Managers

Northwest Straits Commission
10441 Bayview-Edison Road
Mount Vernon, WA 98273

phone: 360.428.1084
fax: 360.428.1491
e-mail: commission@nwstraits.org
web: www.nwstraits.org

As a result of this support and assistance, we have a comprehensive program combating the problem of derelict fishing gear through strategic removal operations, targeted research, and prevention-focused outreach and education. NOAA Marine Debris Program grants have provided significant funding to our program, enabling us to remove more than 3,900 derelict fishing nets from Puget Sound, restoring 528 acres of marine habitat and protecting annually from entanglement in derelict gear more than two million animals, including mammals, birds, ESA listed fish, and commercially-important invertebrates.

We could not have made such significant progress without the assistance of the NOAA Marine Debris Program. NOAA staff and scientists provided critical initial support for our program; guiding our program development and helping us work through research questions, policy road blocks, and field removal protocols. Throughout the years we have relied on Marine Debris Program staff as technical advisors and liaisons with other researchers and agencies. NOAA Marine Debris Program grants have provided much-needed funding at critical junctures through the years. There are no other funding sources available that target the pervasive problem of marine debris in our oceans.

There is still a lot of work to be done in Puget Sound. There remain 1,000 derelict nets, many lost years ago, that still must be removed. More than 12,000 crab pots are lost and become derelict every year in Puget Sound. We intend to continue our work to eliminate harm from derelict fishing gear but we cannot do it alone.

The NOAA Marine Debris Program, as well as the U.S. Coast Guard programs addressing marine debris, are essential both to our understanding of the economic and ecological impacts of marine debris and to minimizing these impacts through prevention, education and removal. This legislation will ensure that NOAA can continue its crucial work and reaffirms NOAA's commitment to address marine debris.

Thank you again for considering this bill and we urge the committee to advance this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Ginny Broadhurst, Director
Northwest Straits Commission

Jerry Masters, Chair
Northwest Straits Commission



NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

July 22, 2011

Chairman Frank LoBiondo
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Ranking Member Rick Larsen
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Letter of Support for HR 1171, the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen,

On behalf of Natural Resource Defense Council's 1.3 million members and activists, we would like to thank you and the other members of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation for including The Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments (HR 1171) in the hearing today, and to ask you to pass this bill through the subcommittee. Marine debris poses a serious threat to our valuable ocean resources, by killing sea life, damaging precious coral reefs, and contaminating beaches and waterways that should be preserved for future generations to enjoy. We believe that HR 1171 represents an important step toward reducing the marine debris, especially plastic pollution in our oceans: as such, we support this bill.

Marine debris that results from man-made materials—including everything from small disposables such as cigarette butts and plastic bags to large items like fishing nets and cargo containers lost from ships— is harmful to marine life and coastal economies. Municipalities that depend on coastal tourism often spend millions annually, even in these difficult economic times, combating this persistent and quite possibly preventable issue.

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The original Marine Debris Act passed with bipartisan support and established programs within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Coast Guard to help evaluate and prevent the impacts of marine debris. It is important to continue these programs, which help improve our understanding of the economic and ecological impacts of ocean trash and minimize these impacts through prevention, education and removal.

Marine debris is a serious and persistent problem. NOAA's efforts to research, prevent and educate the public about ocean trash are vital to the overall health of our waterways, and the passage of HR 1171 would not only allow and encourage them to continue this crucial work, but would modify the existing programs to avoid unnecessary redundancies with other agencies. Once again we thank you for considering this important piece of legislation and urge you to advance the bill.

Sincerely,



Leila Monroe
Staff Attorney, Oceans Program
Natural Resources Defense Council

OCEAN CHAMPIONS

July 22, 2011

Chairman Lobiondo
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Lobiondo,

On behalf of thousands of Ocean Champions members and activists, we would like to thank you and the other members of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation for including H.R. 1171, The Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments in the July 26 hearing. Ocean garbage is a huge and growing problem, and continuing the NOAA / Coast Guard Marine Debris Program is a critical step in the battle to restore clean and healthy oceans.

Marine debris is estimated to kill millions of seabirds and 100,000 marine mammals each year. In all, 270 ocean species are affected by entanglement or ingestion by the roughly 14 billion pounds of trash that flow into our oceans each year. This trash also harms human health when we consume fish that have ingested toxic plastics. In addition, marine debris costs millions of dollars in beach cleanup expenses, boating accidents and lost tourism revenues.

The original Marine Debris Act passed with bipartisan support in 2006, and H.R. 1171 enjoys bipartisan support today. This legislation will ensure that NOAA can continue its important work to research, prevent and mitigate ocean garbage. We thank you again for hearing this crucial bill, and we urge the committee to advance it.

Sincerely,

David Wilmot, Ph.D.
President and Co-Founder

Mike Dunmyer
Executive Director

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OCEAN CHAMPIONS

July 22, 2011

Ranking Member Larsen
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Larsen,

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Sincerely,

David Wilmot, Ph.D.
President and Co-Founder

Mike Dunmyer
Executive Director

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Ocean Conservancy
Start a Sea Change

202.429.5609 Telephone
202.872.0619 Facsimile
www.oceanconservancy.org

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of our more than 700,000 members and volunteers world wide, Ocean Conservancy would like thank you and the other members of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation for including H.R. 1171, The Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments in today's hearing. The pervasive threat of ocean trash, or marine debris, is a significant challenge for our time that affects us all. We need solutions so that future generations have clean waterways and a healthy ocean to enjoy, and one of these solutions is HR 1171. This legislation will help to address and minimize the adverse impacts of ocean trash and we strongly support this bill.

Marine debris, or ocean trash, includes everyday items from bottles, plastic bags, and lighters to lost fishing gear, tires and even shipping containers lost at sea. All of these items and many more have significant impacts on wildlife, ecosystems and economies. Municipalities pay millions of dollars a year to clean beaches and keep trash out of waterways. In Long Beach, California alone, raking machines used to remove ocean trash from beaches cost $18 million to install and maintain.

The original Marine Debris Act passed with bipartisan support and established programs within NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard to help assess, determine and prevent the impacts of marine debris. These programs are essential both to our understanding of the economic and ecological impacts of ocean trash and to minimizing these impacts through prevention, education and removal. The U.S. Coast Guard enforces international and US regulations on trash disposal at sea, as well as portside disposal facilities to prevent trash from entering the marine environment. Through their "Sea Partners" campaign, the U.S. Coast Guard works to educate the public on the impacts and prevention of marine debris through conferences, public education classes and vessel safety checks. NOAA has developed innovative partnerships to create energy from discarded fishing gear, educated thousands of people with its Marine Debris 101 resources, and hosted an international conference that brought the world's leading experts together to identify solutions and secure commitments for a future of trash free seas.

The problem of ocean trash, however, is growing everyday. This legislation will ensure that US Coast Guard and NOAA can continue their crucial work of research, prevention and education on ocean trash. HR 1171 reaffirms NOAA and the Coast Guard's commitments to address marine debris and will streamline the program to avoid duplicating with the efforts of other agencies. Thank you again for hearing this bill and we urge the committee to continue to advance this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Emily Woglom
Director, Government Relations
Ocean Conservancy

AWARE

Protecting Our Ocean Planet ~ One Dive at a Time

Chairman LoBiondo
Ranking Member Larsen
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
507 Ford HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of thousands of professional and recreational volunteer scuba divers, Project AWARE Foundation would like thank you and the other members of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation for including H.R. 1171, The Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments in today's hearing. This legislation will help to address marine debris – a growing threat to the health of our ocean planet and we strongly support this bill.

As an organization that works with divers across this nation and in over 100 countries to collect data and remove debris from underwater near shore environments, we see the direct impacts of marine debris. From the smallest bits of plastic, to car batteries and appliances, to enormous fishing nets, the "stuff" of our daily lives makes its way to the ocean by the ton every day. Pervasive debris kills wildlife, destroys habitats, and threatens our health and economy. Found in even the most remote ocean places, once underwater, debris can remain for generations.

The original Marine Debris Act was passed with bipartisan support. It established important programs within NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard to help assess, determine and prevent the impacts of marine debris. These programs are essential both to our understanding of the economic and ecological impacts of ocean trash and to minimizing these impacts through prevention, education and removal. The U.S. Coast Guard enforces international and US regulations on trash disposal at sea, as well as portside disposal facilities to prevent trash from entering the marine environment. Through their "Sea Partners" campaign, the U.S. Coast Guard works to educate the public on the impacts and prevention of marine debris through conferences, public education classes and vessel safety checks. At sea the U.S. Coast Guard monitors debris when it becomes a hazard to navigation to ensure the safety of maritime shipping.

NOAA has developed innovative partnerships to create energy from discarded fishing gear, educated thousands of people with its Marine Debris 101 resources. The issue of marine debris is a global problem and NOAA has been working to promote international action including the hosting of an international conference that brought the world's leading experts together to identify solutions, secure commitments for a future of trash free seas and work towards a international framework for action.

The problem of ocean trash, however, is growing everyday. Reauthorizing the Marine Debris Act is a first, but critical step forward that will ensure that NOAA can continue to lead and support crucial work of research, prevention and education on marine debris. HR 1171 reaffirms NOAA's commitment to address marine debris and will streamline the program to avoid duplicating the efforts of other agencies. Thank you again for hearing this bill and considering the issue of marine debris. We urge the committee to continue your work on this critical issue and to move this important legislation forward.

Sincerely,

Jenny Miller Garmendia
Executive Director

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July 20, 2011

From Science to Solutions®

Chairman Lobiondo
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Lobiondo:

Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), a large business that is presently supporting the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) doing contract hydrographic survey, would like to register its strong support for H.R. 1171, a bill to reauthorize and amend the Marine Debris Research, Prevention and Reduction Act.

SAIC has had the privilege of supporting NOAA on hydrographic survey and marine debris mapping since 1994. This highly successful public-private partnership has resulted in thousands of miles of U.S. coastline and offshore sea-lanes being accurately surveyed in support of modern and updated nautical charts. Similarly, from 2006-2009 SAIC was awarded tasks to assess marine debris left as a result of the passing of Hurricane Katrina over the waters of Lake Borgne and Terrebonne Bay, Louisiana. These extremely large survey areas comprised a total of 336 square nautical miles of extremely shallow water, in areas that are heavily used by commercial fisherman and recreational boaters on a daily basis.

These important surveys required new technologies and innovative techniques to explore and assess the turbid and extremely shallow water (surveying to less than four feet water depth) in order to determine man-made objects that were sunken or displaced as the storm surge and high winds associated with Hurricane Katrina devastated the southern Louisiana and Mississippi coasts. Within the two bodies of water SAIC survey scientists found 881 objects that constituted a navigationally-significant hazard. These were mapped, reported and provided to state and federal agencies for eventual removal. As a result of this survey, mariners on Lake Borgne and Terrebonne Bay are safer and more productive in their daily work and play.

America's navigable waters continue to be stressed by natural phenomenon and human activities and the need for debris mapping and eventual removal has never been more critical. SAIC fully supports the intent of this legislation and urges its consideration.

Sincerely,

Don Jagoe, CAPT, USN (Ret.)
VP, SAIC
221 3rd Street, Newport, RI 02840

July 20, 2011

From Science to Solutions®

Ranking Member Larsen
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Ranking Member Larsen:

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America's navigable waters continue to be stressed by natural phenomenon and human activities and the need for debris mapping and eventual removal has never been more critical. SAIC fully supports the intent of this legislation and urges its consideration.

Sincerely,

Don Jagoe, CAPT, USN (Ret.)
VP, SAIC
221 3rd Street, Newport, RI 02840

Save Our Shores
Awareness
Advocacy
Action

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Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larson
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Member Larson:

On behalf of our Save Our Shores members and volunteers, I am writing in support of HR 1171. The pervasive threat of ocean trash, or marine debris, is a significant challenge for our time that affects us all. We need solutions so that future generations have clean waterways and a healthy ocean to enjoy, and one of these solutions is HR 1171. This legislation will help to address and minimize the adverse impacts of ocean trash and we strongly support this bill.

Marine debris, or ocean trash, includes everyday items from bottles, plastic bags, and lighters to lost fishing gear, tires and even shipping containers lost at sea. All of these items and many more have significant impacts on wildlife, ecosystems and economies. Municipalities pay millions of dollars a year to clean beaches and keep trash out of waterways. In Long Beach, California alone, raking machines used to remove ocean trash from beaches cost $18 million to install and maintain.

The original Marine Debris Act passed with bipartisan support and established programs within NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard to help assess, determine and prevent the impacts of marine debris. These programs are essential both to our understanding of the economic and ecological impacts of ocean trash and to minimizing these impacts through prevention, education and removal. The U.S. Coast Guard has worked to educate the public on the impacts and prevention of marine debris through conferences, public education classes and vessel safety checks. NOAA has developed innovative partnerships to create energy from discarded fishing gear, educated thousands of people with its Marine Debris 101 resources, and hosted an international conference that brought the world's leading experts together to identify solutions and secure commitments for a future of trash free seas.

The problem of ocean trash, however, is growing every day. This legislation will ensure that NOAA can continue its crucial work of research, prevention and education on ocean trash. HR 1171 reaffirms NOAA's commitment to address marine debris and will streamline the program to avoid duplicating with the efforts of other agencies. Thank you again for hearing this bill and we urge the committee to continue to advance this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Laura J. Kasa

Laura Kasa
Executive Director of Save Our Shores

We connect people to the ocean. We show them how their actions affect the marine environment, and offer choices to make a positive impact.

Schnitzer

SCHNITZER STEEL INDUSTRIES, INC.
69 Rover Street, PO Box 490905 Everett, MA 02149
Phone (617) 389-8300 Fax (617) 389-0173

July 22, 2011

The Honorable Frank LoBiondo
Chairman, Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

This letter is in reference to the reauthorization of the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act. Schnitzer Steel Industries, Inc. works closely with NOAA's Marine Debris Program and actively participates in efforts to remove and recycle marine debris through the Fishing for Energy Program. We support the reauthorization of the Marine Debris Program and respectfully ask for your leadership in enacting H.R. 1171, the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011.

Since its creation by Congress in 2006, NOAA's Marine Debris Program has been successful in developing public-private partnerships to remove and prevent marine debris in our oceans. A positive example of this work is the Fishing for Energy Program that brings together the federal government with local communities to offer a cost-free solution to fishermen to dispose of derelict gear that can be harmful to the marine environment and navigation if it remains in the ocean or coastal waterways.

The Fishing for Energy Program launched in 2008 through a partnership among NOAA's Marine Debris Program, Schnitzer Steel Industries, Inc., Covanta Energy Corporation and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. To date, 25 ports across the United States have been set up to collect fishing gear that would otherwise remain in the water or dumped at a local landfill. The nine participating states have reeled in more than 1.1 million pounds of gear. In New Jersey, Cape May boasts the highest tonnage of gear collected within the state, with 48 tons of gear collected from commercial fishermen. Collected gear is transported to a nearby Schnitzer Steel facility where the metal is removed for recycling, and rope or nets are sheared for easier handling. The gear is then transported to the nearest Covanta Energy-from-Waste facility and converted into clean, renewable electricity for local communities. Schnitzer Steel is a proud partner of the Fishing for Energy Program and the benefits it provides for fishermen, the marine environment and local economies.

The reauthorization of the Marine Debris Act will reinforce and advance the accomplishments of NOAA's Marine Debris Program as well as the Fishing for Energy Program. There is still a lot of work to do and reauthorization will help to continue effective, non-regulatory strategies that have demonstrated success in reducing, removing, and preventing marine debris in the ocean environment.

Sincerely,

Colin Kelly
Government Relations Manager
Schnitzer Steel Industries
MRB-Northeast

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The Honorable Frank LoBiondo
Chairman
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
U.S. House of Representatives
507 Ford House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
U.S. House of Representatives
108 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

July 21, 2011

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

San Diego Coastkeeper, the region's largest professional environmental organization protecting our waterways for the people and wildlife that depend on them, supports H.R. 1171, The Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments. Thank you and the other members of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation for including this issue on the agenda. The pervasive threat of ocean trash, or marine debris, is a significant challenge for our time that affects us all. We need solutions so that future generations have clean waterways and a healthy ocean to enjoy, and one of these solutions is HR 1171. This legislation will help to address and minimize the adverse impacts of ocean trash and we strongly support this bill.

Marine debris, or ocean trash, includes everyday items from bottles, plastic bags, and lighters to lost fishing gear, tires and even shipping containers lost at sea. Each year, over 40,000 dedicated volunteers collect over 600,000 pounds of debris from San Diego beaches and waterways. This debris is coming primarily from land-based sources, and 6 of the top 10 most-frequently collected items are plastic based. Trash and especially durable plastics have significant impacts on wildlife, ecosystems and economies. Municipalities pay millions of dollars a year to clean beaches and keep trash out of waterways. In Long Beach, California alone, raking machines used to remove ocean trash from beaches cost $18 million to install and maintain.

The original Marine Debris Act passed with bipartisan support and established programs within NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard to help assess, determine and prevent the impacts of marine debris. These programs are essential both to our understanding of the economic and ecological impacts of ocean trash and to minimizing these impacts through prevention, education and removal. The U.S. Coast Guard enforces international and US regulations on trash disposal at sea, as well as portside disposal facilities to prevent trash from entering the marine environment. Through their "Sea Partners" campaign, the U.S. Coast Guard works to educate the public on the impacts and prevention of marine debris through conferences, public education classes and vessel safety checks. NOAA has developed innovative partnerships to create energy from discarded fishing gear, educated thousands of people with its Marine Debris 101 resources, and hosted an international conference that brought the world's leading

experts together to identify solutions and secure commitments for a future of trash free seas.

The problem of ocean trash, however, is growing every day. This legislation will ensure that NOAA can continue its crucial work of research, prevention and education on ocean trash. HR 1171 reaffirms NOAA's commitment to address marine debris and will streamline the program to avoid duplicating with the efforts of other agencies. At the same time, NOAA must work collaboratively with other agencies that will be instrumental in preventing marine debris and trash at the source on land – including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency through implementation of the Clean Water Act. Thank you again for hearing this bill and we urge the committee to continue to advance this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Alicia Glassco

Alicia Glassco
Education and Marine Debris Manager

SURFRIDER
FOUNDATION

July 25, 2011

Dear Chairman LoBiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

On behalf of our 50,000 members and volunteers, Surfrider Foundation would like thank you and the other members of the Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation for including H.R. 1171, The Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments in today's hearing. The pervasive threat of ocean trash, especially plastic pollution, is a significant challenge for our time that affects us all. We need solutions so that future generations have clean waterways and a healthy ocean to enjoy, and one of these solutions is HR 1171. This legislation will help to address and minimize the adverse impacts of ocean trash and we strongly support this bill.

Marine debris, or ocean trash, includes everyday items from plastic bottles, plastic bags, and lighters to lost fishing gear, tires and even shipping containers lost at sea. Much of this trash is unintentional litter that comes from our on-the-go lifestyles. All of these items and many more have significant impacts on wildlife, ecosystems and economies. Municipalities pay millions of dollars a year to clean beaches and keep trash out of waterways. In Long Beach, California alone, raking machines used to remove ocean trash from beaches cost $18 million to install and maintain.

The original Marine Debris Act passed with bipartisan support and established programs within NOAA and the U.S. Coast Guard to help assess, determine and prevent the impacts of marine debris. These programs are essential both to our understanding of the economic and ecological impacts of ocean trash and to minimizing these impacts through prevention, education and removal. The U.S. Coast Guard enforces international and US regulations on trash disposal at sea, as well as portside disposal facilities to prevent trash from entering the marine environment. Through their "Sea Partners" campaign, the U.S. Coast Guard works to educate the public on the impacts and prevention of marine debris through conferences, public education classes and vessel safety checks. There should also remain funding for an international conference that brings the world's leading experts together to identify solutions and secure commitments for a future of clean and healthy beaches and oceans.

The problem of ocean trash, however, is growing everyday. This legislation will ensure that NOAA can continue its work of research, prevention and education on ocean trash. HR 1171 reaffirms NOAA's commitment to address marine debris and will streamline the program to avoid duplicating with the efforts of other agencies. Thank you again for hearing this bill and we urge the committee to continue to advance this important piece of legislation.

Sincerely,
/s/

Angela T. Howe, Esq.
Managing Attorney
Surfrider Foundation

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Monday, July 25, 2011

Chairman Lobiondo
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

and

Ranking Member Larsen
Subcommittee on Coast Guard & Maritime Transportation
2163 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: H.R. 1171, The Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011

Dear Chairman Lobiondo and Ranking Member Larsen:

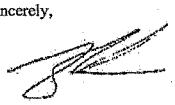
I am writing in support of The Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011. The program has made an impact in reducing the trash on our beaches and in the ocean as well as significantly minimizing the economic impacts of marine debris.

Since its passage by voice approval and signing by President Bush in 2006, the program has removed hundreds of thousands pounds of debris from beaches and derelict fishing gear from our waters. This effort enhances tourism through cleaner beaches and fisheries through removal of gear which continued to "ghost" fish.

As an American who makes his living, working on and around the ocean, as well as spending a fair bit of my free time at sea, I am very interested in keeping our oceans beautiful and safe and free of debris

Please support the reauthorization amendments.

Sincerely,



TerraSond Limited
Thomas S. Newman, PLS, CH
President, CEO

By: Email to Kristen.Bor@mail.house.gov for delivery.



July 22, 2011

The Honorable Frank LoBiondo, Chair
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation
U.S. House of Representatives
2427 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-3002

Dear Congressman LoBiondo:

On behalf of the participants of the Western Alaska Community Development Quota (CDQ) Program, we are writing to express our strong support of H.R.1171, the Marine Debris Act Reauthorization Amendments of 2011, which reauthorizes the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act. Collectively, the Western Alaska Community Development Association represents the six CDQ entities, the 65 eligible CDQ communities and over 27,000 citizens who reside along the Bering Sea/Aleutian Islands coast and participate in federal fisheries through the CDQ Program.

As members of the Marine Conservation Alliance, the six CDQ organizations strongly support marine debris removal projects along Alaska's coastline. To date, the Marine Debris Removal initiative carried out by the Marine Conservation Alliance Foundation has collected over two million pounds of debris from over 76 large scale projects conducted across the state, providing jobs and a renewed sense of community pride by the residents involved. Aerial surveys indentifying debris concentrations have made possible the creation of the Alaska Marine Debris database. Over 1,400 Alaska fishermen have been trained in marine debris prevention and middle and high school marine debris and sustainable fisheries curriculums have been developed to help educate and prevent further pollution.

WACDA respectfully requests your favorable consideration of the reauthorization of the Marine Debris Research, Prevention, and Reduction Act. Marine debris removal is an important component of safe, sustainable fisheries vital to so many Alaskans and is an issue that affects not only Alaska, but fisheries nationwide.

Sincerely,
Western Alaska Community Development Association

Aggie M. Blandford
Executive Director

cc: WACDA Board of Directors/CDQ Panel
Congressman John Mica
Congressman Nick Rahall
Congressman Don Young
Merrick Burden, MCA