

**Opening Statement**  
**The Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo**  
**Chairwoman**  
**Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife**  
**Tuesday, March 3, 2009**

**Oversight Hearing entitled “Managing Our Ocean and Wildlife Resources in a Dynamic Environment: Priorities for the New Administration and the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress”**

The start of the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress marks a period of great uncertainty for our Nation. The United States faces an economic crisis that has cut more than three million jobs, frozen credit markets, and generated large federal and state budget deficits.

Ever-increasing energy demands are driving efforts to rapidly develop new and existing energy sources, while climate change looms as a threat with potentially catastrophic reach that could affect virtually every aspect of our society.

These realities are presenting new challenges to how we manage and conserve our natural resources. Spending freezes and budget cuts in many states have cancelled conservation projects for fish and wildlife habitat restoration. Charitable giving from private endowments, foundations and corporations have also declined, further straining the capabilities of public-private conservation partnerships dependent on non-Federal sources of funding.

In addition, the push for new energy development and energy conservation has created unanticipated trade-offs for conventional fish and wildlife conservation.

Wind energy is just one example. As we seek to develop “green” wind farms, we still have little understanding of how wind turbines installed on an industrial scale might impact migratory bird populations that the Federal Government invests millions of dollars annually to conserve.

At the same time, climate change is already causing shifts in migration and habitats of many species that we are only just beginning to understand.

This dynamic era directly challenges our conventional approaches to the conservation of fish and wildlife habitat and to the maintenance of healthy ecosystems. In fact, the dynamic nature of our time suggests the need for a new conservation paradigm (par-a-dime) and new information and management tools to effectively conserve fish and wildlife habitat over the long-term and across an uncertain landscape in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

We need specific, practical, and constructive recommendations and priorities if we hope to develop a new framework to support science-based, information driven, adaptive management of our fish and wildlife resources, both on land and in the ocean.

I look forward to hearing from our invited witnesses who are presently engaged in a variety of innovative approaches to address these needs. I also look forward to engaging my colleagues in a broader dialogue to determine how we might shape a more effective, adaptive and cooperative conservation model for the times we live in.