

Opening Statement
The Honorable Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife
Wednesday, July 8, 2009
H.R. 1771, *Chesapeake Bay Science, Education, and Ecosystem Enhancement Act of 2009*
H.R. 1053, *Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act of 2009*
H.R. 905, *Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary and Underwater Preserve Boundary Modification Act*

The Chesapeake Bay is our nation's largest estuary. It provided a safe haven for some of our nation's first settlers to survive and thrive in what is now Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia. Although since degraded by a swelling human population, the Bay remains vital and continues to provide food, jobs, and opportunities for outdoor recreation for millions of people, and habitat for over 3,600 plant and animal species.

In recognition of its degraded condition the Chesapeake Bay in 1983 became the first estuary targeted by the Congress for restoration and protection. At that time, the Chesapeake Bay Program was formed as a regional partnership between the Federal Government, the states that fall within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and the District of Columbia. Later, in 1992, Congress authorized within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration a Chesapeake Bay Office to formally acknowledge NOAA's important contributions in our efforts to restore the Bay.

NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office has evolved and developed its programs over the years to meet the needs of restoring the Bay's environment and that programmatic evolution continues today.

Our colleague from Maryland, Congressman Sarbanes, introduced H.R. 1771 to reauthorize NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office. This non-controversial legislation recognizes and supports NOAA's important role in current and planned restoration efforts. On a broader scale, H.R. 1053, a bill introduced by Congressman Wittman, would increase coordination and accountability by requiring a crosscut budget and adaptive management for all restoration activities in the Bay. Both bills are important in furthering our ongoing effort to enhance and recover the resources of the Bay.

We will also re-hear today legislation that has been reintroduced in the 111th Congress by Congressman Bart Stupak to expand the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary located in Lake Huron. The Thunder Bay Sanctuary is the only Sanctuary in the Great Lakes, and it currently protects a collection of 100 nationally-significant shipwrecks off the northeast coast of Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The area immediately surrounding the Sanctuary contains an equal number of historic vessels. H.R. 905 would expand the boundaries of the Sanctuary to encompass and preserve these important cultural resources.