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October 7, 2015

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
House Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Fleming
Chairman
Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee
House Natural Resources Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Bishop and Fleming:

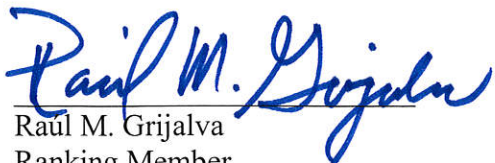
We write to respectfully request an oversight hearing on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) recently released Fisheries Climate Science Strategy (Climate Strategy). We were disappointed by your comments criticizing the Climate Strategy last month and we believe strongly that attempts to better understand and lessen the impacts of climate change on fish stocks and fishing communities deserve the full support of the Natural Resources Committee. At the very least, skeptics of the Climate Strategy should give NOAA the opportunity to testify before the Committee and answer questions, instead of simply dismissing the agency's efforts to solve a very real problem.

Contrary to your remarks, there is nothing radical about preparing for climate change and there is significant data and justification underpinning the Climate Strategy. Carbon pollution is making ocean waters warmer and more acidic, and a growing body of scientific literature is showing that these changes are impacting fish, shellfish, and the habitat they need to survive. Fishermen across the country are already feeling these impacts and bracing for more. It is not only appropriate, but also necessary for NOAA to provide fishery managers with the science they need to help rebuild and conserve fish stocks. The alternative is less certainty and lower catches.

The hearing should also include a discussion of NOAA's forthcoming guidance for ecosystem-based management of fisheries. Fishing is not the only factor that affects the abundance of fish, but a failure to address the other factors leaves managers with no choice but to limit fishing as stocks decline. Particularly in the face of climate change, an ecosystem approach to assessing and managing fish stocks, forage, and habitat is critical to ensuring higher, more consistent landings.

We thank you for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to your response. Should you have any questions, contact Matt Strickler of the House Natural Resources Committee Democratic staff at 202-225-6065.

Sincerely,



Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
Natural Resources Committee



Jared Huffman
Ranking Member
Water, Power and Oceans Subcommittee
Natural Resources Committee