



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**

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## Opening Statement

**Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)**

Subcommittee Markup of:

*H.R. 1237, the “COAST Research Act of 2019”,*

*H.R. 1716, the “Coastal Communities Ocean Acidification Act of 2019”,*

*H.R. 1921, the “Ocean Acidification Innovation Act of 2019”,*

*and H.R. 988, the “NEAR Act of 2019.”*

April 9, 2019

Good afternoon and thank you to Chair Fletcher for holding this markup to advance legislation that addresses ocean acidification, one of the major stressors to our oceans and coasts.

The Environment Subcommittee’s first hearing was on climate change impacts on our oceans and coasts. This hearing provided an opportunity to receive testimony from scientific experts and impacted industries about the effects of excess carbon dioxide emissions on the marine environment. Absorption of increasing carbon dioxide emissions from the atmosphere remains a leading cause of ocean acidification. The impacts of these increased acidity levels on marine and coastal ecosystems are both widespread and not well understood. We must address these knowledge gaps in order to develop adaptation and mitigation strategies for this ocean change.

Given the importance of this issue, and how it can impact any coastal community regardless of political affiliation, I am happy to see that the Environment Subcommittee is marking up four bipartisan bills today. Ms. Bonamici’s COAST Research Act would reauthorize and update the Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring, or FOARAM (FOE-ram), Act. The original statute established the Ocean Acidification Program at NOAA and the Interagency Working Group on ocean acidification.

It is important for us as Members of the Science Committee to reauthorize critical programs within our Committee’s jurisdiction that have expired. Providing Congressional direction through reauthorization of federal programs allows for an opportunity to re-evaluate these programs and determine if they need to be updated and modernized.

The other three bills we are marking up today provide additional avenues to address ocean acidification and its impacts through vulnerability assessments, prize competitions, and a National Academies study. All of these activities would enhance the ongoing ocean acidification work currently conducted by NOAA and other federal agencies and help address some of the knowledge gaps in this field.

I again want to thank Chair Fletcher for convening this markup on this suite of ocean acidification bills. I look forward to these bills moving through the Science Committee in a bipartisan fashion before heading to the House floor.

And with that, I yield back.