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U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

August 17, 2012

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Ms. Candace Hansard
Vice President and Reef Deployment Director
Emerald Coast Reef Association
3 Quail Trail
Valparaiso, FL 32580

Dear Ms. Hansard:

The Committee on Natural Resources will hold an oversight hearing titled "*Fishing = Jobs: How Strengthening America's Fisheries Strengthens Our Economy.*" on Saturday, August 25, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. (CDT) in the Lecture Hall of the Holley Academic Center at Florida State University-Panama City at 4750 Collegiate Drive in Panama City, Florida. I cordially invite you or an appropriate representative to testify at this hearing.

The health of the Gulf of Mexico and its fishery resources affect the entire economy of Florida. Florida's commercial and recreational fisheries create and support thousands of jobs throughout the State and contribute to local economies through hotel, restaurant, and bait store expenditures as well as jobs which are connected to the commercial fishing industry. During previous hearings, the Committee has identified a number of challenges and impediments to fully utilizing the fishery resources of the Gulf of Mexico. During your testimony, the Committee is interested in hearing a more detailed view of these challenges by examining: whether outdated scientific information available to fishery managers is limiting harvest levels and harming the economies of coastal communities; whether governmental restrictions on the harvest of fishery resources are unnecessarily harming the coastal economies; and to what extent governmental programs - including catch shares, annual catch limits, rigs-to-reefs, and the National Ocean Policy - will affect how fisheries are harvested in the future.

The Committee is also interested in your views on whether the data generated by NOAA is adequate for fishery managers to comply with the current Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act provisions and whether proposed amendments to the Act would improve the situation. The Committee would like to hear your views whether the precautionary/risk averse approach - in combination with decreasing funding for fishery surveys

and cooperative research - and the 2007 amendments to the Act may be resulting in unnecessarily depressed harvest levels, affecting coastal economies, and fishery-related jobs.

Finally, the Committee would be interested in your views on how the National Ocean Policy will affect your activities and whether the Policy will result in further restrictions and create more uncertainty in the management of fishery resources in the Gulf of Mexico.

Please submit your proposed testimony electronically (in Word or Word Perfect) to Mr. John Hanline (john.hanline@mail.house.gov) no later than 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, August 22, 2012.

Enclosed with this letter are the parameters regarding written and oral testimony. Should you have any questions or need additional information, please have your staff contact Dave Whaley, legislative staff, or John Hanline, clerk, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs at 202-226-0200.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doc Hastings", written in a cursive style.

Doc Hastings
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources

Enclosure