

**Opening Statement**  
**The Honorable Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan**  
**Ranking Member**  
**Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs**  
**Thursday, March 31, 2011**

**Oversight Hearing on Spending for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
and the National Marine Fisheries Service and the President's Fiscal Year 2012 Budget  
Request For These Agencies**

Mr. Chairman,

You and I both come from districts where our constituents benefit from services that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration provides. During the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill and in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, NOAA's Office of Response and Restoration was there, on the front lines, providing scientific information to aid response and recovery efforts in Louisiana, and collecting data to understand the scope of the damage to fisheries and other natural resources in the Gulf of Mexico.

Just this month it was the real-time measurements and modeling technologies developed by NOAA's Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory and installed at NOAA's Tsunami Warning Centers that accurately predicted when the Japanese tsunami would hit the Northern Mariana Islands. This allowed the people I represent to get away from the danger on the shore. And in Hawaii and all along the West Coast of our nation, people were prepared because of NOAA's warning system. So the United States was relatively unscathed by this massive natural disaster and only a few American lives were lost.

These are the kinds of public services that most of us don't think about – until the day we need them. And when that day comes, when that unexpected emergency is suddenly upon us, then we are very glad indeed that our nation has made the investment and that we are prepared.

Now the Administration has requested \$5.5 billion for NOAA for Fiscal Year 2012. That's an increase of \$749.3 million from the enacted level for Fiscal Year 2010. In contrast, the Majority's continuing resolution, H.R. 1, cuts almost \$400 million from the 2010 enacted level. So there is a significant divergence.

But we know that NOAA provides a range of products and services that private citizens and businesses need – not just in emergencies, but on a daily basis – and especially in coastal communities where people's livelihoods depend on health of the oceans. Weather forecasting, knowing how to manage fisheries so they'll keep producing, giving advance warning for natural disasters...

So, we will have to determine – in the very difficult fiscal situation our country faces – which of those services we cannot afford and will have get by without, and which of those services NOAA provides that are simply too important and that we simply cannot afford to be without.

With that, I look forward to hearing from our witness today and learning more about what America is getting for its money.