Opening Statement
Ranking Member Edward J. Markey
Natural Resources Committee Oversight Hearing: "At Risk: American Jobs, Agriculture, Health and Species – the Costs of Federal Regulatory Dysfunction"

Tuesday, May 3, 2011

Thank you Chairman Hastings.

With the opening of the Pacific coast salmon fishing season, I am, looking forward to sitting down to my first king salmon steak dinner of the season.

As we all know, the key to salmon is in the balance. Don't cook it too long, or it will dry out. Don't oversalt the fish, or you'll lose the sweetness.

The same kind of balance must be struck when we regulate pesticides.

We'll call it Iron Chef: Washington Edition. And the special ingredient is federal oversight.

Just like salt, when properly used pesticides can help aide the production of agricultural crops.

And just like salt, when used indiscriminately, or in too large a quantity, it can render a meal, or an entire fish population, inedible.

As the regulatory chefs, we must serve up the right balance between producing food and protecting endangered species, fisheries, water supplies and human health.

We must ensure that the federal government works in harmony to ensure a safe, abundant food supply while protecting our natural resources.

According to the United States Geological Survey, ninety percent of America's surface streams and rivers contain measureable amounts of multiple pesticides. High levels of pesticides in our waters harm our commercial fisheries and impair the recovery of endangered salmon throughout the West. Fully restoring salmon populations in the Northwest

alone would add over **five billion dollars** a year to the regional economy and would revitalize the commercial and recreational fisheries in the region.

The human health impacts from pesticide exposure are also severely disconcerting. In addition to decades of laboratory animal studies that have linked many pesticides to various adverse health outcomes, just last week, three independent public health studies were released, which found that mothers who are exposed to frequently used pesticides, including the ones being discussed today, gave birth to children who have poorer memory and lower I.Q. scores than their peers by the time they reached school age.

We cannot afford to ignore these negative impacts. While I understand that ongoing litigation makes it difficult for the federal agencies present

today to respond to specific questions related to these pending cases, I look forward to discussing more generally how the EPA's registration process for pesticides can incorporate the protective standards of the Endangered Species Act. We must ensure that the federal agencies work together to provide the full level of environmental protection that our endangered species desperately need.

It is important to remember that the consultation process required under the Endangered Species Act is a vital part of every federal agency's obligation to preserve the existence of endangered species. Streamlining a regulatory process does not require a "race to the bottom" on environmental protections. We should not, and do not, need to operate at the lowest common denominator of protection when it

comes to issues as important as human health, water quality, and endangered species.

Instead, we should first ensure that the EPA, the National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Fish and Wildlife Service have the resources they need to complete their endangered species consultations in a timely manner. Second, we should support efforts to ensure that the best, most up-to-date scientific information is utilized by the agencies when consultations occur. Finally, we should ensure that the consultation process is transparent to the public, allowing for full stakeholder participation.

Because of multiple environmental impacts, including pesticides, three years ago, the west coast salmon fishery experienced a closure that was unprecedented in magnitude and duration. This closure rippled up and down the coast decimating

livelihoods and communities that depend on this natural resource.

With that, I would like to thank the witnesses for being here today and look forward to learning more about these issues.