

Farm Bureau, Agricultural Retailers, Cattlemen and Other Groups Support Flores Amendment to H.R. 1947

Dear Colleague,

Today, the House will consider H.R. [1947](#), the ***“Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013.”***

As part of House Republicans’ effort to combat unnecessary spending and burdensome federal regulations, Representative Flores (TX-17) has sponsored an amendment that would require the USDA Inspector General (IG) to prepare and submit a report detailing all activities engaged in and resources expended in furtherance of the President’s National Ocean Policy as well as any FY2014 budget requests in support of implementation.

Established by Executive Order and without clear statutory authority, the National Ocean Policy sets up a new level of federal bureaucracy with control over the way inland, ocean and coastal activities are managed. This has the potential to inflict damage across a spectrum of sectors including agriculture, fishing, construction, manufacturing, mining, oil and natural gas, renewable energy, and marine commerce, among others.

Multiple attempts by the Natural Resources Committee to obtain information on the funding and implementation of this policy have gone unanswered by the Administration. The Flores Amendment would compel the USDA IG to provide Congress with a complete accounting of the resources expended in furtherance of the policy.

I want to draw your attention to a [letter](#) circulated this morning by numerous agricultural groups including the Farm Bureau, Agricultural Retailers Association, Fertilizer Institute, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association and American Loggers Council supporting the Flores amendment. According to the letter, the Administration has “been committing unknown amounts of resources and personnel toward the development of an initiative that has not been authorized by Congress,” which could impact “activities in upland areas, potentially impacting a number of additional states.”

I strongly encourage you to support the Flores Amendment to H.R. 1947. Please contact Dave Whaley with the Natural Resources Committee or Eric Gustafson with Rep. Flores if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Doc Hastings
Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee

June 19, 2013

Dear Member:

As the House begins consideration of the *Federal Agriculture Reform and Risk Management Act of 2013*, it is expected that an amendment sponsored by Rep. Bill Flores will be considered that would require a study on the extent of Agriculture Department activities engaged in and resources expended in furtherance of the National Ocean Policy. We urge your support for the Flores amendment.

Since the National Ocean Policy was established pursuant to Executive Order 13547 in July 2010, entities across the federal government, including USDA, have been committing unknown amounts of resources and personnel toward the development of an initiative that has not been authorized by Congress.

USDA is a member of the National Ocean Council, and USDA representatives have been identified to serve on "Regional Planning Bodies" charged with developing "Coastal and Marine Spatial Plans" in regions including the Northeast and Gulf of Mexico. Under language adopted by the executive order, such bodies could also address activities in upland areas, potentially impacting a number of additional states.

In addition, the recently-released National Ocean Policy Implementation Plan calls on USDA to protect millions of acres of lands including forestlands, and calls on agencies including USDA to "[i]ncorporate [ecosystem-based management] into Federal agency environmental planning and review processes."

Despite USDA's involvement in the National Ocean Policy over the past three years, and the obvious potential for impacts on agriculture interests to result from continued policy implementation, the full extent of the department's activities and role in the process remains entirely unclear.

In light of this situation, requiring a report on the activities that USDA has engaged in and the resources that USDA has expended in furtherance of National Ocean Policy implementation (as well as any related FY 2014 budget requests) is good public policy and ensures the kind of transparency that the American people deserve and expect.

We urge your support for the Flores amendment.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Loggers Council
CropLife America
National Agricultural Aviation Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Onion Association
Public Lands Council
The Fertilizer Institute