

**Statement of Nancy Sutley
Council on Environmental Quality
Before the
Committee on Natural Resources**

United States House of Representatives

FY 2013 Budget Hearing

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Chairman Hastings, Ranking Member Markey, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the President's Fiscal Year 2013 Budget request for the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). As the President has outlined in his *Blueprint for an America Built to Last*, the President's budget reflects the importance and complementarity of safeguarding our environment and strengthening our economy by investing in clean energy, innovation, and manufacturing. We at CEQ are pleased to play a part of that broader effort to speed up the economic recovery. But the budget also focuses on living within our means, which is why CEQ's FY 2013 budget request includes a reduction from last year's level. Those of us in public service are committed to continuing to find ways to make the Federal Government more efficient and more effective.

I would like to briefly discuss CEQ's role, our accomplishments to date, and what fully-funding the Administration's request for CEQ in FY 2013 will allow us to accomplish.

Council on Environmental Quality's Role

The Council on Environmental Quality was established by Title II of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Signed into law by President Nixon on January 1, 1970, following overwhelming bipartisan votes in both the House and Senate, NEPA is a cornerstone of our country's commitment to responsive government and informed decision-making. Under NEPA, CEQ has the following responsibilities:

- 1) To advise the President on national environmental policies and priorities;
- 2) To review and appraise Federal Government activities relating to environmental policy objectives, and to coordinate and resolve disputes among Federal agencies and departments' activities relating to the environment; and
- 3) To implement NEPA and develop appropriate regulations.

As Chair of CEQ, I serve as the President's principal environmental policy adviser, and in this capacity I develop policies, set priorities, and coordinate efforts of the many Federal agencies and departments. I am supported in these actions by my

Deputy Director and General Counsel, Gary Guzy, and our staff in the Council of Environmental Quality.

CEQ Accomplishments from 2011

As you may know, CEQ's coordinating function helps to avoid redundancy and conflict while fostering efficiency and policy innovation across the Federal Government. Much of our focus the past year has been in the areas of streamlining Federal decision-making, sharing best practices, supporting job creation and facilitating interagency collaboration pertaining to NEPA.

Over the course of the last year, we have focused our efforts on several priority areas:

- 1) Implementing and modernizing NEPA;
- 2) Enhancing Federal Government sustainability;
- 3) Improving the stewardship of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes;
- 4) Protecting and restoring America's ecosystems; and
- 5) Promoting clean energy and addressing climate change.

CEQ, working alongside Federal Departments and Agencies, made progress in many of these areas, and I would like to take this opportunity to share those accomplishments with you.

1) Implementing and Modernizing NEPA

Over the past year, CEQ has intensified its ongoing work to accelerate infrastructure project delivery by modernizing agency implementation of NEPA and improving the overall efficiency and effectiveness of Federal environmental review and permitting processes.

Recognizing that the health of our environment and the health of the economy are inextricably linked, this Administration has focused on improving, and demonstrated a positive track record on, NEPA implementation. Over the course of the last three years, we have focused our efforts on:

- A robust effort to revise our NEPA guidance documents to Federal Agencies;
- An active dialogue with the general public on evidenced-based NEPA reforms; and
- Active engagement with the President's Jobs Council and Federal agencies on enhanced collaboration on expedited permitting for infrastructure projects.

On the last point, we believe our work on expedited permitting for infrastructure projects enhances Agency collaboration and be transferable to a broader universe of

job-creating infrastructure projects, as well as to help realize broader permitting efficiencies that can be made.

NEPA requires the government to analyze and publicly disclose the environmental consequences of its proposed actions before undertaking actions that could significantly affect the human environment. CEQ's tracking of Federal NEPA reviews for 193,000 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects revealed that 99.9% were completed by September 30, 2011. Agencies were able to apply Categorical Exclusions (the least intensive form of NEPA review) to 96% of ARRA projects. Environmental information and public input obtained through the NEPA process helped agency decisionmakers choose cheaper, more efficient, and more sustainable ARRA project designs.

For major projects, the NEPA process can provide a vehicle for coordinating other permitting and planning requirements at the Federal, State, local, and tribal levels, and avoiding duplicative and unnecessary sequential reviews. Through interagency coordination and oversight of Federal NEPA implementation, CEQ is leading or participating in several efforts to achieve these objectives, either by accelerating decisions on particular priority projects, or advancing broad reforms to the overall process.

In response to recommendations from the President's Jobs Council, CEQ has worked closely with other offices on implementation of the August 31, 2011, Presidential Memorandum on "Speeding Infrastructure Project Delivery." Specifically, CEQ is working to facilitate agencies' review of 14 high-priority job-creating infrastructure projects for expedited environmental review and permitting decisions. CEQ also consulted with other offices on the design and launch of the Federal Infrastructure Projects Dashboard, where Federal agencies publicly track schedules and status information on pending Federal actions for the 14 priority projects.

CEQ has also established three sector-specific Rapid Response Teams (RRTs)—for Renewables, Transmission, and Transportation. Each RRT consists of senior staff representatives from the relevant action and resource agencies, who meet bi-weekly to set priorities, resolve issues, and report on progress. Through the RRTs, sector-specific priorities gain greater visibility in Federal agencies with jurisdiction over relevant permitting environmental approval decisions.

- The Renewables RRT is developing a roadmap of Federal regulatory requirements for project developers.
- The Transmission RRT is coordinating statutory permitting, review, and consultation schedules between Federal and State agencies for seven high-priority transmission lines.
- The Transportation RRT is facilitating coordination and issue resolution to expedite the six priority transportation projects selected by DOT under the Presidential Memorandum on Speeding Infrastructure Delivery.

NEPA Pilot Program

In March 2011, CEQ launched a NEPA Pilot Program to solicit ideas from Federal agencies and the public about innovative time- and cost-saving approaches to NEPA implementation. CEQ will work with project managers to track implementation and advocate that Agencies incorporate these best practices and lessons learned into new or revised NEPA procedures.

Two of the pilot projects are focused on disseminating IT solutions to improve the NEPA process. One pilot identified web-based tools developed by the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service that significantly shorten the amount of time needed to manage environmental reviews. Through another pilot project, CEQ is working with EPA on the public release of NEPAAssist, a GIS database of environmental data. Providing easy access to consolidated environmental information during initial project development, siting, and design will reduce and minimize the time and effort required to address environmental, safety, and health concerns.

Another pilot will gather lessons-learned from Federal and non-Federal NEPA practitioners who have significant experience preparing Environmental Assessments to develop best practice principles designed to assist in preparing more efficient and cost-effective NEPA environmental reviews.

In January 2012, CEQ and DOT announced a pilot project to cut costs and fast track construction for the high-speed inter-city passenger rail project in the Northeast Corridor between Washington, D.C., and Boston, MA. The Northeast Rail Corridor is the busiest rail corridor in the United States, and expediting this environmental review will lead to more jobs and a stronger regional economy. The pilot will engage government stakeholders and the public in the environmental review process earlier to set benchmarks that maintain rigorous environmental protections and save time and costs by avoiding conflicts and delays in the later steps of rail-project development.

Finally, in February 2012, CEQ and the U.S. Forest Service announced the selection of a NEPA Pilot, "Approaches to Restoration Management," that will evaluate and compare the effectiveness of U.S. Forest Service environmental reviews for two innovative and collaborative forest restoration projects.

NEPA Efficiencies

In addition to these initiatives, CEQ has continued to exercise its statutory authority under NEPA to provide guidance to Federal agencies on how best to comply with the procedural requirements of NEPA. Since 2009, CEQ has issued several new guidance documents to advise Federal agencies on more efficient approaches to NEPA.

- In May 2010, CEQ issued guidance on Emergencies and NEPA that addressed how agencies can ensure efficient and expeditious compliance with NEPA when agencies must take exigent action to protect human health or safety and valued resources in a timeframe that does not allow sufficient time for the normal NEPA process. This guidance also addressed how agencies, in any situation including emergencies, can develop focused and concise Environmental Assessments (EAs) to provide an expeditious path for making decisions when the proposed action does not have the potential for significant impacts.
- In November 2010, CEQ finalized guidance on how to establish and use “categorical exclusions” (CEs) for activities—such as routine facility maintenance—that do not need to undergo intensive NEPA review because the activities do not individually or cumulatively have significant environmental impacts. The CE guidance reinforced the value of categorical exclusions.
- In January 2011, CEQ issued guidance on the use of mitigation commitments in EAs. Agencies often use EAs to identify mitigation measures that, when implemented, will eliminate potential significant impacts that might require review in a more intensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).
- In December 2011, CEQ issued new draft guidance for public comment on improving the efficiency of the NEPA process overall, by integrating planning and environmental reviews, avoiding duplication in multi-agency or multi-governmental reviews and approvals, engaging early with stakeholders, and setting clear timelines for the completion of reviews.

Finally, CEQ has fulfilled its responsibilities to review proposed agency NEPA implementing procedures with an eye to improving agency NEPA compliance in a timely and efficient manner.

Retrospective Review of NEPA Regulations

In January 2011, President Obama issued Executive Order 13563, calling on agencies to engage in retrospective regulatory analysis of rules that may be outmoded, ineffective, insufficient, or excessively burdensome. To meet its obligations to improve our regulatory system by protecting public health, welfare, safety, and our environment while promoting economic growth, innovation, competitiveness, and job creation, CEQ is using the NEPA Pilot Program to review its NEPA Regulations. We are actively engaging with Federal agencies and the general public as part of this retrospective review process.

The CEQ NEPA Regulations establish guidelines Federal agencies must follow to ensure that their NEPA implementing procedures are consistent with NEPA’s policy objectives and procedural requirements. CEQ’s goal is to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the NEPA process by identifying and selecting projects that underscore

the President's goals for improved public participation, greater integration and innovation, flexible approaches and sound science in our regulations. Eventually, successful pilots could lead to the adoption of new or revised NEPA procedures and could identify which of CEQ's NEPA Regulations would benefit from revision. Under this process, CEQ is working to identify innovative approaches that reduce the time and costs required for effective implementation of its NEPA Regulations. These innovative approaches promote faster and more effective Federal decisions on projects that create jobs, grow the economy, and protect the health and environment of communities.

2) Enhancing Federal Government Sustainability

The Federal Government is the largest consumer of energy in the U.S. economy. Preliminary data shows that the Federal Government spent more than \$20 billion on electricity and fuel in 2010. It owns nearly 500,000 buildings, operates more than 600,000 vehicles, and purchases more than \$500 billion per year in goods and services. The Federal Government's size and scale make improving its own practices an effective policy tool to move the country toward greater sustainability.

On October 5, 2009, the President signed an Executive Order (EO) that sets sustainability performance goals for Federal agencies and calls for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from Federal activities. More specifically, the EO required Federal agencies to set a 2020 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target; increase energy efficiency; reduce fleet petroleum consumption; conserve water; reduce waste; support sustainable communities; and leverage Federal purchasing power to promote environmentally-responsible products and technologies. CEQ is responsible for assessing Federal agency progress towards the goals of the EO and for identifying tools and strategies to assist Federal implementation efforts.

Under the EO, each Federal agency was required to submit its 2020 greenhouse gas pollution reduction target to CEQ and OMB so that the Federal Government could develop an overall greenhouse gas reduction goal. On January 29, 2010, the President announced that the Federal Government would reduce its direct emissions of greenhouse gas pollution by 28 percent from 2008 levels by 2020. Assuming current energy prices, achieving this reduction target will save the American taxpayers a cumulative total of \$8 to \$11 billion in avoided energy costs through 2020.

In April 2011, CEQ released the first-ever comprehensive GHG emissions inventory for the Federal Government. Based on that inventory, the Federal Government reduced direct GHG emissions and GHG emissions associated with electricity and other offsite generated energy used by the Federal government (Scope 1 and 2) by 6.4 percent, from 52.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MMTCO_{2e}) to 49.1 MMTCO_{2e}, from a 2008 baseline.

We are also on track for the Federal Government to meet the President's call to lead by example. In FY 2010, the Government purchased or produced renewable energy equivalent to 5.2% of total electricity use, reduced water consumption intensity by 10.4% relative to fiscal year 2007, and decreased energy intensity by 14.6% relative to fiscal year 2003. As an example of Government leading the way in renewable energy, the Department of the Navy is making one of the largest commitments to clean energy in history. As the President announced in his State of the Union Address, the Navy will purchase 1 gigawatt of renewable energy, enough to power a quarter of a million homes a year.

CEQ's Office of the Federal Environmental Executive will continue to work with agencies to ensure implementation of the Executive Order on Federal Leadership in Environmental, Energy, and Economic Performance and the Federal greenhouse gas emission reduction goal.

3) Stewardship of the Ocean, our Coasts, and the Great Lakes

America's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes regions support over 66 million jobs and contribute nearly \$8 trillion to the national economy each year. In response to more than a decade of discussions, extensive public input, and calls for action from two bipartisan Commissions, in July 2010, President Obama established the first comprehensive National Ocean Policy to improve the stewardship of the ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes, and a National Ocean Council to implement the Policy.

As I stated before this Committee last October, the National Ocean Policy provides the framework for all Federal agencies to better work together to thoughtfully manage our nation's oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes and ensure they will be healthy and productive for current and future generations. The policy is proactive, looking to avoid conflict and delay, which is all too often the norm. It provides for better coordination and integration of the laws, policies, and regulations affecting the oceans, coasts, and Great lakes, and seeks to avoid the kinds of conflicts and controversies that often delay and sometimes derail ocean-related projects that support the economy and coastal communities. At its heart, this policy is about efficiency, reducing red tape, and making faster, more informed decisions.

Since the National Ocean Policy was established, we are already seeing some progress:

- In January 2012, the National Ocean Council released its Draft Implementation Plan identifying priority actions under existing authorities that will provide the Nation with clean water and improve public health; support emerging and existing uses of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes – and the resources they provide – through basic research and more efficient permitting; strengthen the resiliency of coastal communities against climate change impacts; and deliver observations and information that allow

our Nation's businesses to operate safely and efficiently off of our coasts. It reflects ideas and input from States, local officials, tribal governments, industry, recreational users, non-governmental organizations, the public, and other stakeholders who provided critical feedback to the National Ocean Council.

- The National Ocean Policy principles have helped shape numerous other ocean-related work in the Arctic, the Gulf Coast, and the Great Lakes. For example:
 - In light of the Policy's adoption of ecosystem-based management, the U.S. is proposing an ecosystem-based management initiative under the Arctic Council, which is now under way.
 - The National Ocean Council and the Gulf of Mexico Ecosystem Restoration Task Force are coordinating efforts to ensure resources and efforts are leveraged rather than duplicated with respect to Gulf Coast restoration.

- In December 2011, the National Ocean Council launched its data portal, *ocean.data.gov*, which is a one-stop source for Federal ocean data, information, and tools to improve science-based decision-making and support all stakeholders engaged in mapping and planning for the future uses of the ocean, our coasts, and the Great Lakes. *Ocean.data.gov* brings Federal data to the public in an open and transparent manner. Data sources for *Ocean.data.gov* will be provided by NOAA, the Navy, DOI, EPA, NASA, Army Corps of Engineers, DOE, the National Science Foundation, and other Federal agencies, and will make accessible valuable long-term datasets on oceanographic conditions and natural resources.

- A key aspect in the development and implementation of the National Ocean Policy has been extensive public engagement and transparency. For example, over the past year, the National Ocean Council brought together Federal, State, tribal, and local government representatives, members of the public, and other stakeholders from across the country for twelve regional public listening sessions on the draft Implementation Plan outlines, face-to-face meetings, and a National Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning Workshop, in addition to public comment periods, to discuss how implementation of the National Ocean Policy can grow and protect jobs, secure energy independence, enhance recreational activities, and maximize uses of our Nation's waters while ensuring their conservation.

- The National Ocean Council also established a Governance Coordinating Committee, comprising officials from states, Federally-recognized tribes, and local governments. The Governance Coordinating Committee works with the National Ocean Council on ocean policy issues that cut across political, geographic, and other boundaries. The Governance Coordinating Committee

provides a critical link to and strengthens the lines of communication with State, tribal, and local governments on ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes issues.

We are also seeing better collaboration and use of resources across the Federal Government as a result of the Policy. For example, the National Ocean Policy has strengthened interagency collaboration on regional, ocean, and coastal restoration efforts in the Gulf Coast through the Gulf Coast Restoration Task Force and the Great Lakes through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative.

4) Protecting and Restoring America's Ecosystems

On April 16, 2010, President Obama launched the *America's Great Outdoors* Initiative, calling upon the Secretaries of the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality to develop a 21st-century conservation agenda that would seek to protect America's natural and cultural resources, and connect people to the great outdoors through jobs, education, recreation, and service. The President asked Federal agencies to listen to and learn from the American people resulting in what became one of the largest public engagement efforts around conservation in our Nation's history.

The Administration has spent the last two years implementing the shared vision of the America's Great Outdoors initiative (AGO), and a few select accomplishments include—

- *Expanding Recreational Access to Public Lands* – The Administration established a Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation that is improving recreational access to public lands, waters, and shores in partnership with Federal, State, and tribal agencies.
- *Connecting Communities with the Outdoors in All Fifty States* – As outlined in the America's Great Outdoors 50-State Report released in November 2011, DOI is working with other Federal agencies, States, and communities on more than 100 projects across all fifty States to improve park accessibility, create urban green spaces, restore rivers, and protect special places.
- *Hunting and Fishing Access* – In the last two years, USDA helped support 25 State public access programs, which will open an estimated 2.4 million acres for hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreational opportunities on privately-owned land. USDA provided almost \$23 million in grants in FYs 2010 and 2011 through the Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program.

CEQ will continue its work in the coming year with its Federal agency partners and the general public on the AGO initiative.

The Obama Administration has given priority attention to targeted ecosystem restoration efforts. Through collaboration with State, local, tribal, nonprofit, and private stakeholders, we are achieving tangible improvements in water quality, species recovery, habitat restoration, and invasive species management with focused work in key ecosystems. Success and advancement could not happen without interagency coordination, because any one agency alone cannot address all of the issues these complex ecosystems are confronting. CEQ helps to coordinate and facilitate interagency work to restore America's ecosystems, as illustrated by the following examples—

- *Chesapeake Bay* – In May 2009, President Obama signed Executive Order 13508, calling on the Federal Government to lead a renewed effort to restore and protect the Nation's largest estuary and its watershed. This effort is widely regarded as essential and the most comprehensive plan yet to save this critical ecosystem.
- *Everglades* – The Administration has invested more than \$756 million in Federal construction funding from DOI and the Army Corps from 2009 to 2012 to jump-start projects that are restoring freshwater flows to the Everglades. Everglades restoration projects now under way have generated over 6,600 direct construction jobs and will generate thousands more.
- *Gulf Coast* – President Obama established the Gulf Coast Ecosystem Restoration Task Force to restore ecosystems from the damage of the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill and to reverse long-standing ecological decline through coordinated actions. The Task Force released the *Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy* in December 2011, and work is progressing to implement the strategy.
- *Great Lakes and Asian Carp* – The Obama Administration has made the most significant investment in decades in restoration of the Great Lakes, the world's largest surface freshwater system. Through a coordinated interagency process led by the EPA, implementation of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is helping to restore the Great Lakes ecosystem, and ultimately improve the health and environment of the area's 30 million Americans. Further, GLRI has been central to the Administration's coordinated effort to prevent invasive Asian Carp from reaching the Great Lakes.
- *California Bay-Delta* – DOI, EPA, USDA, the Army Corps, NOAA, and the State of California are working to elevate and coordinate water issues in the California Bay-Delta.

5) Promoting Clean Energy and Addressing Climate Change

As the President outlined in his State of the Union, the Administration is focused on building an economy built to last. The President is committed to helping transition our economy to one that runs on clean energy while also preparing for the impacts

of climate change. We at CEQ are doing our part to support job creation in clean energy and prepare for the effects of climate change.

Recovery Through Retrofit

In 2009, the Vice President asked CEQ to develop proposals to expand green job opportunities and boost energy savings for the middle class. In October 2009, CEQ presented the Vice President with the “Recovery Through Retrofit” report, the result of an interagency effort that was focused on ways to address barriers to and lay the groundwork for a self-sustaining home energy upgrade industry. The report focused on three particularly challenging areas – the lack of information available to consumers and businesses, the lack of financing options, and the lack of skilled workers – and suggested ways for the Federal Government to begin to break down these barriers. Since release of the report, CEQ has led ongoing implementation efforts across Departments and agencies, including:

- DOE’s Home Energy Score, a new voluntary program that is helping homeowners make cost-effective decisions about energy improvements;
- A pilot program for the Federal Housing Administration’s PowerSaver loan product, to help consumers finance energy-saving improvements;
- DOE’s Guidelines for Home Energy Professionals, to help foster a skilled and credentialed retrofit workforce, including the development of standard work specifications for upgrades and guidelines for effective training and certification. To complement this effort, EPA has worked with DOE to release a set of Healthy Indoor Protocols for Home Energy Upgrades, which provide a set of best practices for improving indoor air quality in conjunction with energy upgrade work in homes; and
- USDA has launched the Rural Economic Development Energy Efficiency Effort (REDEEEE), to improve access to home energy efficiency improvements in rural America by working with electric cooperatives.

Better Buildings Initiative

In February 2011, the President announced the Better Buildings Initiative, which aims to improve energy efficiency in commercial buildings by 20 percent by 2020 through a series of administrative actions, a challenge to the private sector, and legislative proposals. The Administration also announced a MOU between DOE and the Appraisal Foundation to establish standards and guidelines to industry practitioners for factoring energy performance into buildings appraisals, as well as a new competitive grant program for technical and community colleges to create training programs for building energy management. This past year, the President announced the formal rollout of the Better Buildings Challenge - a public-private partnership that by December 2011 included new private and local public sector commitments totaling more than 1.6 billion square feet, 300 manufacturing plants, and nearly \$2 billion in financing support for building energy upgrades. In addition,

the President issued a Memorandum directing agencies to enter into a combined minimum of \$2 billion in performance-based contracts over the next two years to retrofit Federal buildings. These contracts represent an approach to financing retrofits that uses long term-energy savings to pay for up-front costs, resulting in no net cost to the American taxpayer.

CEQ's work over the past year has also included three specific energy and climate initiatives: transmission on public lands, Federal Government adaptation to climate change, and developing new Federal-state collaboration on Great Lakes wind energy.

Transmission on Public Lands

The Administration is committed to increasing the amount of clean energy produced and transmitted across the country. To further this commitment and avoid duplicative work by a number of agencies, CEQ facilitated the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by nine Federal agencies that will expedite the siting and construction of transmission facilities in the U.S. The MOU, which was announced by the President on October 27, 2009, reduces duplication of effort across the federal Government and reduces the time and barriers to site new transmission lines on Federal lands.

CEQ is now working to ensure that the MOU is implemented on the ground through the interagency Rapid Response Team for Transmission (RRTT), which was briefly mentioned above. The RRTT is focusing initially on seven pilot project transmission lines which, when built, will help increase electric reliability and integrate new renewable energy into the grid. These seven transmission pilot projects are estimated to create thousands of construction and operation jobs.

Climate Change Adaptation Task Force

The Obama Administration is taking action to address the risks to our economy, water and food supply, national security, infrastructure, public health, and natural resources posed by the impacts of climate change. In 2009, by Executive Order, the Obama Administration convened the Interagency Climate Change Adaptation Task Force, co-chaired by CEQ, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), and NOAA, and including representatives from more than 20 Federal agencies. Building on the expertise and resources of these agencies, the Task Force has been working to expand and strengthen the Nation's capacity to better understand, prepare for, and respond to extreme events and other climate change impacts.

Under the auspices of the Task Force, this year Federal agencies have taken steps to identify and address vulnerabilities across all sectors, providing scientific analyses and decision support in sectors, and development of three sector-specific adaptation strategies designed to ensure coordinated action to safeguard the nation's critical

natural resources, particularly freshwater, oceans and coasts, and fish, wildlife, and plants.

As part of this effort, CEQ worked with DOI and NOAA to provide Congress with the fish, wildlife, and plants adaptation report called for the FY 2010 Interior Appropriations Conference report language.

Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Request for CEQ

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Markey, as you know, the Administration has requested \$3.1 million for CEQ for fiscal year 2013. This funding level includes a reduction of \$42,000 or 1.3 percent of last year's enacted level.

Now in its 42nd year, NEPA has a proven record of protecting public health, safety, and environmental quality by ensuring transparency, accountability, and public involvement in Federal actions and in the use of public funds. As environmental issues grow more complex, CEQ strives to provide the agencies a consultative resource and an institutional base of NEPA knowledge by assisting them to formulate, revise, and update their NEPA procedures on a regular basis. Maintaining this funding level is essential for CEQ to continue its mission of helping Federal agencies navigate environmental conflicts, find sustainable solutions, promote transparency, and ease NEPA implementation. In FY 13, we will continue our work to improve NEPA implementation, increase interagency coordination through the National Ocean Policy and America's Great Outdoors Initiative, and maximize efficiencies within the Federal Government to ensure that Federal regulations continue to protect the air we breathe and the water we drink in a commonsense and cost effective manner.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and all members of the Committee, I am proud of what the Council on Environmental Quality has accomplished over the past three years and with your support, and am looking forward to what the Council will achieve this year. I appreciate the opportunity to testify this morning and look forward to answering your questions.