

STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE HENRY E. BROWN, JR., AT THE
FULL NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE MARKUP OF H. R. 934: APRIL
22, 2009.

Mr. Chairman, you have scheduled H.R. 934 for today's markup. The bill would give the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands jurisdiction over submerged lands out to 3 geographic miles.

America Samoa, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands were given this same authority by Congress in 1974. However, the Compact with the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands was not yet complete and therefore the Commonwealth was not afforded the same authority as the other Territories at that time.

The Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife held a hearing on the bill on February 25th and the witnesses all testified in support of the bill. This bill is a noncontroversial piece of legislation, which will give the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands parity with the other U.S. Territories of America Samoa, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands with regard to jurisdiction over submerged lands out to 3 geographic miles.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.