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**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

**Opening Statement By**  
**The Honorable John Fleming**  
**Chairman**

**Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs**

**At The Oversight Hearing On**

**The Implementation of P.L. 110-229 and a Legislative Hearing on H.R. 1466**  
**July 14, 2011**

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Good morning, today the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans and Insular Affairs will conduct in essence two hearings. The first panel will be an oversight hearing on the implementation of title VII of Public Law 110-229, which required the application of federal immigration laws in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and a legislative hearing on H.R. 1466, a bill to resolve the status of certain persons legally residing in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands under the immigration laws of the United States. The second panel will be a legislative hearing at the request of the gentle lady from Guam, Mrs. Bordallo on H.R. 44, the Guam World War II Loyalty Recognition Act. I will ask that witnesses only testify on the issues specific to each panel.

One of the first items under consideration today is Public Law 110-229, the Consolidated Natural Resources Act, which was enacted in 2008.

The United States and the Northern Mariana Islands entered into a political union in 1976 with the enactment of the Covenant to establish the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands as a self-governing entity under the sovereignty of the United States. Under the Covenant, the Northern Mariana Islands were exempt from federal immigration laws which allowed the local government to control immigration.

In 2008, Congress amended the Covenant to require the application of federal immigration laws in the Northern Mariana Islands. The law created a 5-year transition period to allow for a smooth conversion from local to federal control over immigration.

As stated in the law, it was the intent of Congress for the 'orderly phasing-in of federal responsibilities over immigration' in the Northern Mariana Islands. The law's intent was to minimize, to the greatest extent practicable, potential adverse economic and fiscal effects by encouraging diversification and growth of the economy. It also is intended to assist the Commonwealth in achieving progressively higher standards of living for its citizens and giving it as much flexibility as possible in maintaining existing businesses and other revenue sources, while developing new economic opportunities, consistent with federal law and the mandates of Public Law 110-229.

The Subcommittee is interested in hearing from today's witnesses how the implementation of the various provisions required in the law has progressed since the effective date of November 28, 2009.

We will also hear testimony on H.R. 1466, a bill introduced by our Ranking Member, Mr. Sablan, to address the status of certain individuals living legally in the Northern Mariana Islands who will be adversely affected by the extension of federal immigration laws to the Northern Mariana Islands.

Approximately 4,000 legal residents of the Northern Mariana Islands will be affected by the full implementation of federal immigration laws set to occur on November 28, 2011. H.R. 1466 will allow these residents of the Northern Mariana Islands to maintain their current legal status and provide them with the opportunity to adjust their status under the federal immigration laws.

I look forward to hearing the testimony of our distinguished witnesses, and now recognize our Ranking Member Mr. Sablan, for any statement he would like to make.