

# **Committee on Resources**

## **Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans**

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### **Background**

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#### **H.R. 2090 THE EXPLORATION OF THE SEAS ACT**

#### **SUMMARY:**

This legislation would establish the Coordinated Oceanography Program Advisory Panel that will submit a report to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation of the Senate on the feasibility and social value of a coordinated international oceanography program.

#### **BACKGROUND & ANALYSIS:**

Over the past 15 years, tremendous advances in oceanographic technology have been made and recent technological advances have, for the first time in human history, given us the ability to understand and fully explore the world's oceans. Unfortunately, the United States and other nations which conduct significant oceanographic research do not yet have in place a comprehensive plan for determining what data needs to be collected, or for integrating that data into an easily usable system. H.R. 2090 establishes a panel to determine whether we are making the most productive and efficient use of the new technologies available to us, and whether we are making the best investments in our limited resources.

H.R. 2090 establishes the Coordinated Oceanography Program Advisory Panel which will be composed of individuals with academic experience in oceanography, marine biology, marine geology, ichthyology, and ocean-related economics. The Panel will submit a report to the Committee on Resources of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation of the Senate on the feasibility and social value of a coordinated international oceanography program. This report will include: an identification of countries and organizations that would be likely to participate in a coordinated program; a description of the areas of study where international cooperation currently exists; and an identification of the areas of study where current knowledge is inadequate.

If the Panel determines that a coordinated oceanography program is feasible and necessary, the report shall include recommendations for establishing such a program, including the institutional arrangements, treaties and laws needed, the methods and incentives needed to secure cooperation and commitments from participating nations, the costs of establishing a coordinated program, and the types of capital equipment necessary to support a coordinated program.

#### **SUBCOMMITTEE ACTION:**

The Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans held a hearing on the Exploration of the Seas Act on October 27, 1999. H.R. 2090 was introduced on June 9, 1999, by Representative James Greenwood, Subcommittee Chairman Jim Saxton and 15 other cosponsors.

#### **ADMINISTRATION POSITION:**

The Committee has not received a Statement of Administration Position.

#### **AMENDMENTS:**

No amendments are anticipated.

**STAFF CONTACT:**

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