

Committee on Resources

Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans

Opening Remarks; The Honorable Eni H. Faleomavaega.htm, Delegate, American Samoa

Statement of the Honorable Eni Faleomavaega for Hearing on the Pacific Salmon Treaty and 1999 Agreement Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife, and Oceans

October 28, 1999

Thank you Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing on the Pacific Salmon Treaty. I am pleased that after so many years of stalled negotiations and sometimes acrimonious disputes over fish, the United States and Canada were able to reach a new agreement in June of this year.

I know that my colleagues in the Pacific Northwest and in Alaska are very concerned with the health of their valuable salmon fisheries. And we all recognize that the highly migratory nature of these species make cooperation with the Canadians a vital part of fisheries management in this region. For without an effective Pacific Salmon Treaty, we risk letting international disputes hamper the already difficult task of managing sustainable salmon populations.

I expect our witnesses to elaborate on the provisions of the June accord and what legislation is needed from Congress to facilitate its implementation. I hope that representatives of stakeholder groups can give us their perspective, since although that process ultimately failed, several of the new provisions appear to come from their recommendations. In addition, I would ask for comment on funding levels and language included in current appropriations bills. Frankly, I am concerned about, first, lack of funding that may imperil this accord and second, sufficiency language that exempts incidental take of salmon in Alaska from the Endangered Species Act before the biological opinion from the National Marine Fisheries Service has been completed.

Thank you, and I look forward to testimony from our witnesses.

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