

Committee on Resources

Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans

Statement

STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE
RICHARD POMBO
AT THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON
FISHERIES CONSERVATION, WILDLIFE AND OCEANS
OVERSIGHT HEARING ON CITES:
MARCH 28, 2000.

Today we are discussing the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, CITES.

The 11th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CITES will be held next month, in Nairobi, Kenya. CITES calls for biennial meetings of the Conference of the Parties to review its implementation, make provisions enabling the CITES Secretariat to carry out its functions, consider amending the lists of species designated for protection, and for other purposes such as recommendations for the improved effectiveness of the Convention.

As I stated at the July 13th oversight hearing on CITES, Chairman Young, Subcommittee Chairman Saxton and myself, agree that in order to maximize public oversight and comments on the U.S. positions at CITES, congressional hearings during the proposal and planning session are needed and highly beneficial.

In my opinion the July hearing provided assistance to the Administration in formulating its "Proposed Negotiating Positions for Agenda Items and Species Proposal", which were published in the March 8th Federal Register. I know it has assisted Members of this Committee.

While I have concerns and questions regarding several issues, I would like to thank the Department, specifically Don Barry, for holding true to its word by keeping this Committee updated on the status of positions. I know that this was not always easy to do, considering that he and his staff are dealing with hundreds of other nations as well as the Congress. [Which is sometimes in its own world]. However, from my perspective, the positive exchange of dialogue and information that has taken place up to this point today, far exceeds that the last time I led the Congressional Delegation to the last CITES. Because of this productive turnaround in responsiveness to the Congress, I am optimistic about the prospect of working with the Administration in Nairobi, instead of repeating the performance that confronted the U.S. delegation in Harare several years ago.

While I recognize that the positions "proposed" in the March 8th Federal Register will not be "final" for a couple of more weeks, I hope this hearing, as did the July hearing, will also serve as an aid to the Administration in preparing for the CITES meeting next month.

The Committee has reviewed the recent Federal Register notice and we look forward to the Assistant Secretary's opening statement and subsequent discussions on the proposed positions.

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