

**WRITTEN STATEMENT FROM THE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD FOR THE LEGISLATIVE HEARING
ON**

[H.R. 2073](#), [H.R. 3692](#), and [H.R. 4256](#)

**BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER, WILDLIFE, AND FISHERIES
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

SEPTEMBER 3, 2025

The Department and NOAA acknowledge and appreciate the ongoing work with this Subcommittee on:

1. H.R. 2073, the “Defending our Dams Act”
2. H.R. 3692, “To reauthorize the Young Fishermen's Development Act;” and
3. H.R. 4256, the “Digital Coast Reauthorization Act of 2025”

H.R. 2073 - Defending our Dams Act

NOAA values the ongoing collaboration with this Subcommittee to meaningfully address complex ocean and coastal issues. Ocean, river, commercial, tribal, and recreational salmon and steelhead fisheries in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Alaska, and California are an important part of the economy, generating more than \$790.6 million in value annually. Salmon and steelhead rely upon both marine and inland freshwater habitats to complete their life cycle. Congress has charged NOAA with the responsibility of managing and conserving salmon both in the ocean and freshwater.

The Administration is still reviewing the bill, but offers the following preliminary comments. The bill seeks to prohibit any federal spending or technical assistance that allows, leads to, or studies the breach or functional alteration of the four Lower Snake River dams which include: Ice Harbor Dam, Lower Monumental Dam, Little Goose Dam, and Lower Granite Dam. The bill also requires prescribed fish “spillage” approval. The bill states the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers cannot execute any spill operations at the dams without joint approval from the Secretary of the Army (through the Chief of Engineers) and the Administrator of the Bonneville Power Administration. These officials must consider the operational impacts across the broader Columbia River System before granting approval. Spill operations at the Lower Snake River dams are an ongoing operational strategy to reduce dam-related impacts by improving down-river migration survival of juvenile Endangered Species Act-listed salmonids. NOAA looks

forward to working with the Subcommittee to understand its role as it relates to this legislation.

H.R. 3692 - To reauthorize the Young Fishermen's Development Act

The reauthorization of the Young Fishermen's Development Act (H.R. 3692) would extend the expiration of the program from 2026 to 2031. This program would be administered by NOAA's National Sea Grant College Program, which the 2026 President's Budget terminates. This bill would continue a national grant program that funds various activities, such as, training in seamanship, navigation, electronics; education on vessel and engine care; and workshops on sustainable fishing practices. The program would also extend partnerships to provide tools to establish seafood businesses.

H.R. 4256 - Digital Coast Reauthorization Act of 2025

The Digital Coast Reauthorization Act of 2025 (H.R. 4256) would reauthorize the Digital Coast Act and continue to authorize NOAA to provide a digital information platform that integrates coastal data with decision-support tools and training, with a particular emphasis on enhancing resilient communities, ecosystem values, and coastal economic growth. It would strengthen existing partnerships, fill critical data gaps, and provide the training most needed by coastal communities. H.R. 4256 would enable NOAA to continue to establish tools that track ocean and Great Lakes economic data for each coastal state and territory and to enter into financial agreements to support non-Federal participation in the program. It also authorizes the collection of fees for training, workshops, or conferences to advance the program's strategic priorities if specified in NOAA's annual appropriations language.

Coastal communities increasingly rely on NOAA's Digital Coast program to understand, plan, and address changing conditions. Digital Coast has been instrumental in supporting local, state, and national decision-making in ways that promote economic growth and help prepare for impending changes and disasters. Officials and practitioners use Digital Coast resources to plan infrastructure investments, understand flood risk, pinpoint natural resources that support recreational and tourism activities, assess ocean and Great Lakes economies, and map landscape changes.

Now in its eighteenth year, the Digital Coast program provides a high return on investment, meeting the unique needs of the coastal management community through a durable partnership with private companies, universities, and federal, state, and local agencies. NOAA supports the Digital Coast Act (H.R. 4256). With the reauthorization of this legislation, NOAA would continue to strengthen our partnerships with the private and public sectors and enhance their access to our trusted, accurate, and high-quality coastal data sets.

Conclusion

We appreciate the Subcommittee's support for NOAA's mission and look forward to working with you on these bills and future legislation. Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this legislation. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.