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4 EXAMINING INVASIVE SPECIES POLICY.

5 Tuesday, December 1, 2015

6 House of Representatives

7 Subcommittee on the Interior

8 Committee on Oversight and Government Reform

9 Washington, D.C.

10 The subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:36 p.m., in
11 Room 2154, Rayburn Office Building, Hon. Cynthia Lummis
12 [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

13 Present: Representatives Lummis, Gosar, Buck, Palmer,
14 Lawrence, and Plaskett.

15 Also present: Representative Hurd.

16

17 Ms. Lummis. The subcommittee will come to order.
18 Without objection, the chair is authorized to declare a
19 recess at any time.

20 Today the Subcommittee on the Interior will examine the
21 problem of invasive species in the U.S., and the
22 effectiveness of the Federal government's attempts to control
23 and eradicate invasives. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
24 specifically defines an invasive specie as an exotic species
25 whose introduction into an ecosystem in which the specie is
26 not native causes or is likely to cause environmental or
27 economic harm or harm to human health. There are currently
28 almost 50,000 such species living in the United States today.
29 We promise there will not be a test on how many of those you
30 can name.

31 The impact of invasive species is hard to ignore. They
32 are one of the leading causes of population decline and
33 extinction in native plants and animals. They cause billions
34 of dollars per year in damages across the country. Recently
35 the Department of the Interior estimated that it spends
36 \$100,000 million on invasive species management.

37 In response to this significant and growing problem,
38 President Clinton created the National Invasive Species
39 Council in 1999. This Council is co-chaired by the

40 Secretaries of Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce. Its
41 mission is to coordinate the work of numerous agencies to
42 address and eradicate invasive species.

43 Part of the Council's job is to produce a national
44 management plan every two years for the treatment and
45 eradication of endangered species. Since 1999, the Council
46 has only released two plans, one in January 2001 and nearly 8
47 years later in 2008. A review of the 2001 plan by the
48 Government Accountability Office found problems with
49 coordination, delays, and setting clear long-term goals.

50 In the past several years, there has been relatively
51 little oversight of the Council's work and success in
52 managing the invasive species problem. Questions continue to
53 be raised about whether the Council and other Federal
54 agencies are effectively treating certain invasive species.

55 The spread of these nuisances is startling. 2 years
56 ago, Dr. George Beck testified before the House Committee on
57 Natural Resources about the inefficiencies and
58 ineffectiveness of the Council and the Federal government in
59 treating invasive weeds. Dr. Beck warned that invasive weeds
60 were spreading at a far faster pace than they were being
61 eradicated. He questioned the government's claims about the
62 amount of land infested with non-native weeds that it

63 successfully treated in previous years. He also cast doubts
64 on whether the Council was using the most cost-effective
65 means of fighting invasive species. This hearing will allow
66 the Council to update us on its progress.

67 In addition, we will look at the impact of three
68 invasive species that have caused significant and costly
69 headaches for my home State of Wyoming as well as Ranking
70 Member Lawrence's home State of Michigan. Mr. Hurd will also
71 raise some issues in his district in Texas. The nuisance and
72 dangers of these particular non-native species provides
73 startling illustrations of the harmful effects of endangered
74 species and the need for capable treatment efforts.

75 Our witnesses today bring a broad and diverse knowledge
76 of invasive species and the havoc they wreak on our country.
77 We will hear from the executive director of the Council on
78 its work. We will also hear from three experts who have
79 studied the risks of invasive species in America, and can
80 provide insight into the importance and urgency of addressing
81 this issue.

82 As the problem of invasive species in America worsens,
83 we must continue to revisit and reassess the situation and
84 our treatment and eradication efforts. I look forward to the
85 hearing, and I look forward to our witnesses' testimony, and

86 I want to thank you for being here today.

87 I also want to thank the ranking member, Ms. Lawrence,
88 for being the impetus and driving force behind holding this
89 hearing today. And I now recognize Ms. Lawrence, the ranking
90 member of the Subcommittee on the Interior, for her opening
91 statement.

92 Ms. Lawrence. I want to say that it is a pleasure,
93 Madam Chairman. I thank you for helping me bring this issue
94 forward and for your leadership. I want to thank all the
95 witnesses here today for appearing, and I look forward to
96 hearing your testimony.

97 You have heard some of the statistics that I am sure,
98 the witnesses, you are very familiar with. One of the
99 concerns we have is that what is our plan. The amount of
100 money that we are paying to address invasive species to me
101 should not be spent without a comprehensive plan. I
102 recognize that, Dr. Reaser, you are new, and so we are
103 looking forward to hearing what your vision and what the plan
104 is.

105 Invasive species pose serious problems to our
106 environment, and we understand that, but it is also a
107 significant challenge to the conservation of native fish and
108 wildlife. No habitat or region is immune from the threat of

109 invasive species. As our chair mentioned, we spend over \$125
110 billion each year controlling these plants and animals and
111 repairing the damage they inflict on our property and our
112 natural resources.

113 As we talk about our environment, you cannot leave out
114 the impact that invasive species has. In Michigan, I want to
115 talk about that, and one of the reasons why this is so
116 important to me, zebra mussels are a serious economic threat
117 to our recreational fishing and commercial activity in the
118 Great Lakes. And we in Michigan are passionate about our
119 Great Lakes and our water, and so when you start seeing the
120 impact of these invasive species, this rises to a level of
121 being a very serious concern.

122 The zebra mussels alone has caused more than \$1 billion
123 in damage by clogging the pipes and the filtration equipment
124 of municipalities and industrial water systems. They have
125 also damaged boats and decks, and it costs Michigan more than
126 \$250 million a year to clean those affected pipes and
127 machinery. We are also facing a threat from the Asian carp,
128 which can devastate recreational fishing if not controlled.

129 According to the University of Michigan Sea Grant
130 Institute, recreational and commercial fisheries contribute
131 in excess to \$4 to \$7 billion to the economy each year.

132 Recent reports show that these invasive fish have already
133 caused significant problems in our Ohio and Mississippi River
134 Basins.

135 Only a few weeks ago, the Michigan Department of
136 Environmental Quality and the Department of Natural Resources
137 confirmed the existence of two new invasive species in water,
138 and in 2014 the Administration reports it allotted an
139 estimated \$2.3 billion across the range of Federal agencies
140 and activities to control and eradicate these species. I
141 recognize that this issue requires a long-term plan, and that
142 is what I want to hear today. Also I understand that
143 scientists are working around the clock to create a remedy
144 for this problem.

145 Since the plan has not been revised since 2008, even
146 though the regulations, it is required to issue and update
147 every 2 years, one of the things that I am looking for is a
148 commitment for compliance, and that is something that as part
149 of this committee I will be looking for in the future.

150 While we have not updated our plan, we know that the
151 invasive species problem has worsened, and I feel strongly
152 that a lack of a comprehensive plan on how to deal with this
153 is contributing to the impact. I hope to get some answers
154 today on this issue so that important safeguards can put into

155 place to manage this ever-increasing problem of invasive
156 species.

157 Thank you, Madam Chair.

158 Ms. Lummis. I thank the ranking member. I will hold
159 the record open for 5 legislative days for any member who
160 would like to submit a written statement.

161 [The information follows:]

162

163 Ms. Lummis. The chair also notes the presence of the
164 gentleman from Texas, as I mentioned earlier, Mr. Hurd, a
165 member of the full committee. We thank you very much for
166 your interest in the topic today. And without objection, we
167 welcome Mr. Hurd to participate fully in today's hearing.

168 We now recognize our panel of witnesses. We are pleased
169 Dr. Jamie Reaser, who is newly minted as the executive
170 director of the National Invasive Species Council at the U.S.
171 Department of the Interior. Welcome, Dr. Reaser. Mr. Scott
172 Cameron, president of the Reduced Risks from the Invasive
173 Species Council. Thank you, Mr. Cameron. Dr. Alan Steinman,
174 you are the director as well as a professor at the Robert B.
175 Annis Water Resources Institute at Grand Valley State
176 University. Am I correct?

177 Mr. Steinman. [Off audio.]

178 Ms. Lummis. And Dr. George Beck, professor of weed
179 science at Colorado State University. I studied weed science
180 at the University of Wyoming under a colleague of yours,
181 probably one that was teaching me before you were born. But
182 welcome today, Dr. Beck.

183 [Laughter.]

184 Ms. Lummis. Pursuant to the committee rules, all
185 witnesses will be sworn in before they testify, so please

186 rise and raise your right hands.

187 Do you solemnly swear or affirm that the testimony you
188 are about to give will be the truth, the whole truth, and
189 nothing but the truth?

190 [A chorus of ayes.]

191 Ms. Lummis. Thank you. Please be seated. Let the
192 record reflect that all witnesses answered in the
193 affirmative.

194 Now, in order to allow time for discussions, please
195 limit your oral testimony to 5 minutes. Your entire written
196 statement will be made part of the record so we will have the
197 advantage of it in case it is longer than 5 minutes.

198 We will begin with Dr. Reaser. You are recognized for 5
199 minutes.

200 Ms. Lawrence. Turn your mic on.

201

202 STATEMENTS OF JAMIE REASER, PH.D., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
203 NATIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE
204 INTERIOR, WASHINGTON, D.C.; SCOTT J. CAMERON, PRESIDENT,
205 REDUCE RISKS FROM INVASIVE SPECIES COALITION, WASHINGTON,
206 D.C.; ALAN D. STEINMAN, PH.D., DIRECTOR AND PROFESSOR, ROBERT
207 B. ANNIS WATER RESOURCES INSTITUTE, GRAND VALLEY STATE
208 UNIVERSITY, ALLENDALE CHARTER TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN; AND K.
209 GEORGE BECK, PH.D., PROFESSOR OF WEED SCIENCE, COLORADO STATE
210 UNIVERSITY, FORT COLLINS, COLORADO

211 STATEMENT OF JAMIE REASER, PH.D.

212 Ms. Reaser. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee,
213 thank you for inviting me to participate in the hearing on
214 behalf of the National Invasive Species Council, NISC. With
215 me today is Ms. Anne Kinsinger, U.S. Geological Survey's
216 associate director for ecosystems. I will summarize my
217 written testimony, which has been provided for the record.

218 NISC was created by Executive Order 13112, known as the
219 Invasive Species Executive Order, on February 3rd, 1999, to
220 serve as an independent coordinating body for the Federal
221 government's efforts to address invasive species. As you
222 have noted, the Secretary of Interior serves as a co-chair of

223 NISC along with the Secretaries of Agriculture and Commerce.
224 The Secretary of Interior also hosts and oversees NISC staff.
225 At this time, 10 additional departments and agencies are
226 members of NISC. They are listed in my written testimony.

227 As you may be aware or are aware, I started as executive
228 director of NISC staff just 9 weeks ago. That said, I am not
229 new to the invasive species issue. My work has largely
230 focused on invasive species since 1999, not coincidentally
231 the year in which the executive order was signed.

232 But in actuality, my interaction with the invasive
233 species issue goes back much further than that. My
234 grandmother taught me to fish as a young girl. I can
235 remember being frustrated by the fact that I could not catch
236 anything other than carp. I desperately wanted to see pretty
237 sunfish up close. Because the feeding habits of the carp
238 muddied the water, I could not even see a sunfish near the
239 dock.

240 I did my doctoral work in the Great Basin in Nevada,
241 specifically at the southernmost extent of the species range
242 of the Columbia spotted frog. During my time in the field, I
243 became aware of numerous adverse shifts taking place in the
244 lands and waters of the sagebrush ecosystem: the invasion of
245 annual grasses, cheatgrass, and medusahead, and the

246 introduction of non-native amphibians and tropical fish, to
247 name a few. Invasive species clearly warranted concern and
248 concerted action.

249 Since that time, I have worked on various aspects of the
250 invasive species issue in more than 40 countries, frequently
251 helping other governments institutionalize their capacities
252 to address the invasive species issue. In the course of my
253 work, I have seen firsthand how invasive species can
254 devastate the lives and livelihoods of people who depend on
255 local resources.

256 Invasive species impact everyone on a personal level,
257 although we may not equally or fully recognize the extent to
258 which they do. If we care about food security, water
259 security, human health and well-being, animal welfare,
260 employment and the economy -- in short, national security --
261 we need to pay considerably more attention to this often
262 subtle, yet nevertheless pervasive and costly issue, invasive
263 species.

264 The invasive species issue is dynamic and complex.
265 Coordinating activities of Federal agencies and working with
266 non-Federal stakeholders to prevent, eradicate, and control
267 invasive species throughout the U.S. and abroad is a
268 substantial challenge. Thankfully, the challenges can be

269 overcome.

270 Two examples of successes to NISC's leadership include
271 provision of expert advice for more than 100 individuals who
272 have served on the non-Federal Invasive Species Advisory
273 Committee, also created by the executive order. This advice
274 has strengthened Federal programs and initiatives, such as
275 our work on biofuels. And the implementation of the two
276 national invasive species management plans that together
277 contain more than 170 action items. Additional examples can
278 be found in my testimony.

279 As you are well aware, we are operating in a resource
280 constrained world, and due to limited resources, it is fair
281 to say NISC has not yet actualized its full potential. With
282 the support of the Department of the Interior as well as 12
283 other NISC member departments and agencies, I intend to do
284 all I can to mobilize NISC's leadership and capacities to
285 effectively implement the Invasive Species Executive Order
286 from the policy level to the ground level and back again.

287 The work includes, but is not limited to, NISC's four
288 major functions: raising awareness of the linkages between
289 invasive species and various aspects of national security as
290 they relate to each Department; setting priorities for
291 international action that actually has impact at the ground

292 level; fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and
293 long-term commitment to problem solving; and facilitating
294 team work across departments and between Federal, State,
295 tribes, and other stakeholders that not only results in
296 invasive species prevented and eradicated, but ecosystems and
297 ecosystem services restored.

298 Thank you for time and for caring about this critically
299 important issue. I am happy to answer questions regarding
300 this. Ms. Kinsinger is available to answer technical
301 questions on specific species as needed.

302 [The statement of Ms. Reaser follows:]

303

304 Ms. Lummis. Thank you, Dr. Reaser.

305 The chair now recognizes Mr. Cameron for 5 minutes.

306

307 STATEMENT OF SCOTT J. CAMERON

308 Mr. Cameron. Madam Chairman, Ranking Member Lawrence,
309 members of the subcommittee, my name is Scott Cameron. I am
310 president of a nonprofit organization called the Reduce Risks
311 from Invasive Species Coalition, or RRISC. I appreciate the
312 opportunity to testify today on opportunities to improve
313 invasive species policy and programmatic implementation in
314 the United States.

315 RRISC is a 501(c)(3) organization incorporated in 2014.
316 Our mission is to educate the public on the risks imposed by
317 invasive species and to promote cost-effective strategies to
318 reduce those risks. We pride ourselves on being bipartisan
319 with a distinguished advisory board comprised of former
320 senior government officials from the Obama, Bush, Clinton,
321 and Bush Administrations. I am pleased to say that since our
322 inception, we have had a close working relationship with the
323 Congressional Invasive Species Caucus, co-chaired by your own
324 representatives, Dan Benishek from Michigan and Mike Thompson
325 from California.

326 Invasive species pose serious economic and environmental
327 problems across the country. They have been estimated to
328 cost the American economy more than \$120 billion a year and

329 to have a \$1.4 trillion annual impact on the global economy.
330 There are significant public health impacts from invasive
331 species. For instance, invasive species, like West Nile
332 virus and fire ants, put many Americans in the hospital every
333 year, and in some cases they do not survive. Invasive
334 species have single-handedly caused 20 percent of all species
335 extinctions since the 1600s, and they have been implicated in
336 up to half of all the species extinctions over the last four
337 centuries.

338 Indirectly, they cause increased regulatory burden on
339 American society since invasives are in whole or in part
340 responsible for more than 40 percent of the listings under
341 the Endangered Species Act. For example, widespread
342 distribution of invasive cheatgrass in Wyoming and Colorado
343 was a key risk factor that almost led to the listing of the
344 greater sage grouse under the Endangered Species Act earlier
345 this year.

346 If your constituents are concerned about loss of
347 biodiversity and species extinctions in the United States,
348 then they should also be concerned about invasive species.
349 If your constituents are frustrated by the regulatory burden
350 imposed by the Endangered Species Act, that is another reason
351 to be concerned about invasive species because they are

352 putting a lot of species on the ESA list.

353 I would now like to offer a number of recommendations on
354 how institutional arrangements could be improved to yield
355 better results in invasive species management for our
356 country.

357 Congress should direct the National Invasive Species
358 Council to present the Congress with a short annual work
359 plan, 5 pages in length, to include deadlines and intended
360 outcomes of Council activities. This would help focus the
361 political level attention in the agencies on the invasive
362 species problem.

363 The National Invasive Species Council should provide a
364 forum for Federal interagency communication and coordination
365 with regional governors associations -- southern governors,
366 western governors, and so on. NISC should design a national
367 network of regionally-driven, early detection, and rapid
368 response capabilities whose regional priorities are
369 established based on the advice of the governors of those
370 States in those regions.

371 NISC should provide a forum for Federal agency regional
372 executives, BLM State directors, regional foresters, EPA
373 regional administrators, and so on, so that those regional
374 officials could more easily get the attention of the

375 departmental political leadership in headquarters in the
376 Office of Management and Budget. And through more
377 coordinated policymaking at the headquarters level, achieve
378 better on-the-ground coordination at the local level.

379 The Council should provide a forum for ensuring and
380 expediting interagency coordination at the headquarters level
381 so that time sensitive decisions involving invasive species
382 policy, regulatory approvals, or research are less likely to
383 be caught up in bureaucratic red tape in D.C. As an example,
384 facilitating Endangered Species Act, Section 7 consultation
385 between USDA and EPA on new pesticides targeting invasive
386 species; working with the Council on Environmental Quality to
387 streamline environmental compliance for agency on the ground
388 invasive species control actions; and achieving an
389 interagency bio control research agenda that would
390 effectively leverage the relative scientific strengths of
391 EPA, USGS, USDA, and the National Science Foundation.

392 Another recommendation. NISC should seek out and
393 evaluate international best practices and explore the
394 feasibility of adopting those best practices in the United
395 States.

396 It looks like I am over time, so I will stop, Mr.
397 Chairman, and I look forward to questions.

398 [The statement of Mr. Cameron follows:]

399

400 Mr. Buck. [Presiding] Thank you, Mr. Cameron.
401 The chair recognizes Dr. Steinman for 5 minutes.
402

403 STATEMENT OF ALAN D. STEINMAN, PH.D.

404 Mr. Steinman. Thank you, Chairman Buck, Ranking Member
405 Lawrence, and members of the subcommittee. I appreciate the
406 opportunity to testify before you today with regard to the
407 threats posed by invasive species, and, in particular, their
408 impacts in the Great Lakes region.

409 There are four areas that I would like to cover today.
410 The first is invasive species and the Great Lakes. The Great
411 Lakes serve as the poster child for aquatic invasive species.
412 It is now estimated since the 1800s, over 180 non-native
413 species have invaded the Great Lakes ecosystem.

414 The Great Lakes are a national treasure. They hold over
415 20 percent of the world's surface fresh water, and over 90
416 percent of the surface fresh water in the United States. The
417 importance of this resource, both in terms of water quantity
418 and water quality, cannot be overstated given the increasing
419 concerns over water security in this Nation and around the
420 world.

421 Aquatic invasive species are acutely felt in the State
422 of Michigan, a state which touches four of the five Great
423 Lakes -- our governor likes that four of the five Great Lakes
424 favor Michigan -- and where 1 in 5 jobs are linked to water.

425 The second area I would like to talk about are the ecological
426 impacts in the Great Lakes. These include habitat loss, food
427 web disruption, and alterations to native fisheries.

428 Two aquatic invasive species that have been particularly
429 problematic in the Great Lakes are the sea lamprey and the
430 Dreissena mussels, which include the quagga and zebra
431 mussels. The sea lamprey, for those not familiar with it, is
432 an eel-like parasite whose native habitat is the ocean. It
433 got into the Great Lakes after the Welland Canal was
434 improved, and it bypassed the Niagara Falls. By 1938, they
435 had reached all of the Great Lakes.

436 Sea lamprey parasitism is not a pretty site. They
437 attach to fish with a suction cup mouth, and dig their teeth
438 into fish flesh, and finally feed on fish body fluids by
439 secreting an enzyme that prevents the blood from clotting.
440 The lake trout harvest in the upper Great Lakes has declined
441 from about 15 million pounds per year before the sea lampreys
442 to approximately 300,000 pounds now, a decline of 98 percent
443 of this critical fish. The good news is the sea lamprey
444 control program is very effective. We have to apply it every
445 year, though, and it costs about \$20 million per year.

446 The zebra and quagga mussels also have caused extensive
447 damage. They came in through ballast water discharge. The

448 zebra mussel was first found in 1988 in Lake Sinclair,
449 quickly followed by its larger and more aggressive cousin,
450 the quagga mussel. In fact, the quagga mussel is now
451 estimated to have about 950 trillion -- that is with a "T" --
452 in Lake Michigan alone. That is a huge number. They are
453 filter feeders there literally sucking the bioenergetic life
454 out of Lake Michigan. Once you decline the algae levels --
455 they are lower than they are in Lake Superior -- there is no
456 food for the zooplankton to feed on. When there is no
457 zooplankton, there is no food for crayfish to feed on, and
458 when there is no crayfish, there is no food for the top
459 predators, the salmon and the lake trout, to feed on. So the
460 devastation to the food web and the economic impacts are
461 enormous.

462 Which leads me to the third area I would like to talk
463 about: the economic influences of invasive species in the
464 Great Lakes. In Michigan, especially affected by aquatic
465 invasive species, the industry has influenced or affected our
466 power generation, industrial facilities, tourism, and sport
467 and commercial fisheries, which account for about 30,000 jobs
468 and almost \$12 billion in annual sales based on 2010 data.

469 As Representative Lawrence mentioned, the commercial and
470 recreational fishery industry in the Great Lakes is estimated

471 to be between \$4 and \$7 billion, and they are at critical
472 risk by the presence of these invasive species.

473 And finally, I would like to address the management
474 implications. With the Asian carp at the entryways of the
475 Great Lakes, we must be coordinated in our approaches to
476 monitor our waterways to keep invasive species from getting
477 into the Great Lakes, quarantine them when necessary and
478 where possible, and then finally eradicate them when
479 feasible. It is critical to recognize that in a
480 hydraulically connected system like the Great Lakes, the
481 program to control aquatic invasives is only as strong as the
482 weakest link in that chain.

483 Regardless of how vigilant or aggressive Michigan may be
484 in dealing with aquatic invasive species, its waters remain
485 vulnerable if any of the other seven Great Lakes States or
486 two Canadian provinces are not as equally vigilant or
487 aggressive. And this concept of vulnerability applies well
488 beyond aquatic ecosystems. It applies to any connected
489 ecosystem across its jurisdictional boundaries, whether it is
490 water, land, or air.

491 It is clear that we need a coordinated effort to tackle
492 invasive species instead of jumping from one crisis to
493 another, and good science is needed to make informed

494 management decisions. I clearly understand the role of
495 science having worked in the Everglades restoration before I
496 came to Michigan, and I recognize that science does not
497 dictate policy; it helps inform policy.

498 But let me leave you with this one thought taken from
499 Peter Glick, one of the foremost water resource scientists on
500 the planet. It is very difficult to make good public policy
501 without good science, and it is even harder to make good
502 public policy with bad science.

503 Thank you again for the invitation to appear before you
504 today.

505 [The statement of Mr. Steinman follows:]

506

507 \\\Mr. Buck. Thank you, Dr. Steinman.

508 The chair recognizes Dr. Beck for a 5-minute opening.

509

510 STATEMENT OF K. GEORGE BECK, PH.D.

511 Mr. Beck. Chairman Buck, Ranking Member Lawrence, and
512 honorable members of the committee, thank you for the
513 opportunity to testify before you today. I am George Beck,
514 and I am a professor of weed science at Colorado State
515 University. Today I represent the Healthy Habitats
516 Coalition, and we are a diverse alliance dedicated to
517 improving invasive species management in our country.

518 In spite of almost 3 decades of efforts by many
519 organizations working to persuade the Federal government to
520 do a better job controlling and managing invasive species,
521 little progress has been made. Zebra and quagga mussels are
522 in the Great Lakes, and Asian carp is poised to invade those
523 bodies. Cheatgrass, knapweeds, and tamarisk abound in the
524 west; Burmese pythons, melaleuca, and hydrilla are wreaking
525 havoc in Florida. Emerald ash borer and other invasive
526 insects are invading the north, east, and Midwest. All of
527 these are spreading rapidly, and every State has invasive
528 species without exception.

529 Cheatgrass alters habit so significantly that it is
530 clearly linked to the decline of the greater sage grouse and
531 its habitat. We possess, however, the knowledge and ability

532 to recover cheatgrass infested safe grass habitat if we would
533 just seize the initiative to do so. For example, CSU weed
534 scientists just completed a comprehensive study to
535 demonstrate such success, and we also have developed
536 approaches that target and eliminate the cheatgrass soil seed
537 reserve, which then will provide the best opportunity to
538 recover native species habitat.

539 The invasive species conundrum in the U.S. is not
540 necessarily due to a lack of knowledge. Rather it is because
541 of chronically poor Federal land management agency
542 performance around managing invasive species. And this is a
543 reflection of chronically poor administrative leadership
544 concerning invasive species.

545 Leadership from the National Invasive Species Council is
546 practically non-existent. NISC is made up, of course, of
547 most of the President's Cabinet. Most prominently, the
548 members are the co-chairs, Secretaries of Agriculture,
549 Commerce, and Interior. Frankly, NISC could be dissolved,
550 and the funds used to operate that body should be spent on
551 decreasing the population abundance of invasive species and
552 recovering native species habitat.

553 This poor Federal performance is due to at least four
554 things that we have been able to identify: inconsistent

555 budgets and non-transparency in the invasive species
556 budgeting process, a lack of collaboration, prioritization,
557 and on-the-ground performance with State and local
558 governments, using NEPA as an excuse for inaction or
559 justification to postpone making timely management decisions,
560 and poor administrative leadership to develop appropriate
561 invasive species public policy, management, and budgetary
562 action.

563 The solution to these problems has been introduced as
564 bills, H.R. 1485 and S. 2240, the Federal Lands Invasive
565 Species Control, Prevention, and Management Act. The bills
566 focus on the Forest Service, BLM, National Park Service, and
567 Fish and Wildlife Services. These are the major Federal land
568 management agencies.

569 The bills require agencies to develop an invasive
570 species strategic plan that fosters cooperative agreements
571 with States and local governments. The bill also has
572 categorical exclusions that will protect high-value sites
573 from invasive species, fully support and facilitate the
574 development of early detection and rapid response, and then
575 years and years of analysis to approve new management tools.
576 The bills also require invasive species population to be
577 decreased by 5 percent net annually to stay ahead of

578 expansion rates, and change the spending parameters. And
579 these would be 75 percent of invasive species funds to those
580 agencies would have to be put on the ground. Not more than
581 15 percent of those funds can be spent on awareness and
582 research, and up to 10 percent on administration. So the
583 bulk of the money will be directed towards healing the
584 problem.

585 HHC has many supporters for these efforts, including an
586 invasive species resolution from the Western Governors
587 Association and direct support from Governor Butch Otter from
588 Idaho, Governor Cecil Andrus, who is the former governor of
589 Idaho and a former Secretary of Interior, and Governor
590 Martinez from New Mexico. There is no Federal administrative
591 leadership on invasive species. It is up to Congress to pass
592 strong leadership and pass these bills. Doing so will place
593 our country on the road to begin solving the invasive species
594 problem. We must stop kicking this can down the road.

595 Thank you again for this opportunity to share HHC's
596 thoughts on invasive species management in the U.S.

597 [The statement of Mr. Beck follows:]

598

599 Mr. Buck. Thank you, Dr. Beck, and go Rams.

600 [Laughter.]

601 Mr. Buck. The chair will now recognize members for 5
602 minutes, and will recognize himself first.

603 Dr. Reaser, how does NISC coordinate its work with
604 Federal agencies, and States, and local communities to combat
605 invasive species?

606 Ms. Reaser. Thank you for the question. NISC
607 coordinates work through a series of tiers of coordination.
608 NISC itself, as you are aware, are the Secretaries and
609 administrators of the 13-member departments. And then within
610 the NISC structure, broader structure, we also have policy-
611 level leads and more technical-level leads. There are
612 interdepartmental coordination mechanisms throughout that
613 structure. There are also coordination mechanisms between
614 NISC and other structures focused on invasive species, such
615 as the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. And there are
616 regular joint working groups, and joint committees, and joint
617 products with that group and others.

618 And then there are on-the-ground activities where
619 Federal agency representatives are collaborating with States,
620 and tribes, and other stakeholders at the ecosystem level or
621 on a species-by-species specific level.

622 Mr. Buck. What is the annual budget for NISC?

623 Ms. Reaser. For the NISC staff?

624 Mr. Buck. What is the total budget, I guess, and then
625 if you want to break it down, you can explain.

626 Ms. Reaser. Okay. So the approximate budget for the
627 NISC staff is about a million dollars per year, and about a
628 third of that 30 percent is spent on administering the
629 Invasive Species Advisory Committee.

630 Mr. Buck. And appropriately what percentage of the
631 overall budget goes to administrative expenses?

632 Ms. Reaser. So for the NISC staff just to clarify, it
633 is about 65 percent would be salary, travel, basic
634 operations. And then approximately 30 percent would be for
635 the advisory committee's administration.

636 Mr. Buck. Dr. Beck, cheatgrass continues to cause
637 problems with sage grouse habitat. Could you please describe
638 the current status of the cheatgrass threat and what actions
639 have been taken to mitigate its spread?

640 Mr. Beck. Cheatgrass is a controversial plant relative
641 to how much area it occupies. I have heard data everywhere
642 from 50 million to over a hundred million acres, so it is
643 really hard to know.

644 It has not found its way everywhere. For example, 10

645 years ago was the first time cheatgrass showed up in the
646 Gunnison Basin in South Central Colorado. And in the
647 Kremmling area, which is, oh, 150 miles north, it has only
648 been there for about 5 years, or at least that is what people
649 say.

650 So it continues to find new homes. The Great Basin is
651 obviously very inundated with it. It is not so bad that you
652 can close your eyes and point and be looking at cheatgrass
653 whether you know it or not, but we are getting close to that.
654 It is there every year. I mean, I hear people talk about,
655 well, it is not a bad year for cheatgrass, and I say wait
656 until June. It is the same every June. And I even had a
657 student in one of my classes tell me that his mother's
658 neighbor was running around picking this grass from around
659 his yard in the foothills. I think it was above the Estes
660 Park area. And she wanted to know what he was doing, and he
661 said, well, this does not require any water, I do not know
662 what is. And he was planting cheatgrass. So, you know, Pogo
663 was right when he said, we have met the enemy and they are
664 us.

665 So we continue to foster its spread through all kinds of
666 means, some of them inadvertent, and some of them not. But
667 the problem is worsening constantly.

668 Mr. Buck. And what do you think NISC can do to help
669 with the cheatgrass problem?

670 Mr. Beck. NISC's role is to coordinate with the Federal
671 agencies, and I educate a lot in the public. Half of my
672 appointment is extension, and so I must give about 50 to 75
673 presentations a year through Colorado alone, and I just do
674 not see where any coordinating is having effect. In fact, I
675 have visited with some Federal employees who do not even know
676 NISC exists. So there is a transitional loss someplace
677 between Washington, D.C. and the rest of the country.

678 Mr. Buck. Okay. Thank you. My time is almost up, and
679 I recognize the gentlelady from Michigan for 5 minutes.

680 Ms. Lawrence. Thank you, Chair. Ms. Reaser, I
681 understand that the one update that has been made to the
682 management plan was back in 2008. Is that correct? So help
683 me understand why the Council has largely not updated the
684 management plan, and when will it be updated?

685 Ms. Reaser. Okay. So let us step back to 2001.

686 Ms. Lawrence. Okay.

687 Ms. Reaser. And thank you for the question. I think it
688 is an important one. As you know, in the executive order,
689 there is a request for the plan to be revised every two
690 years. The reasons behind that were, of course, to set

691 priorities, raise visibility, and so forth, all reasonable
692 criteria.

693 When the original plan was created, there was a
694 tremendous amount of enthusiasm among the departments for
695 this new culture of collaboration, and the request was to
696 bring priorities together in a comprehensive manner to use
697 the word you used previously. The second management plan
698 followed the pattern of the first management plan. It was a
699 revision thereof, and so it had approximately 90 action items
700 in it as did the first one. There were 170 total.

701 The second management plan ran from 2008 through 2014.
702 Since that time, there has been a process of moving the
703 priorities forward from the first two management plans
704 collectively. There has also been a process of looking at
705 what items within those management plan require further work
706 on an evaluation process going forward.

707 There has been a delay in the process of moving it to
708 the third management plan for a couple of reasons. One,
709 there had been unanticipated staff turnovers and vacancies
710 that could not be accounted for, and did have a significant
711 impact on process. And then more recently, there was a
712 desire to hire my position into place to take leadership over
713 the third management plan, which I am now in the process of

714 doing. And we are looking forward to having that available
715 sometime early next year.

716 Ms. Lawrence. Okay. I wanted to ask if it was
717 achieving the objective of reducing the invasive species rate
718 by 5 percent every year. Are you anywhere close to that
719 goal?

720 Ms. Reaser. So the Invasive Species Management Plan
721 itself is a priority setting mechanism, so each item within
722 the plan has different goals and objectives. Only a small
723 percentage of those would be dedicated for activities related
724 to weeds on the ground. As those projects move forward, each
725 of them is going to have a goal that is context specific. A
726 number of 5 percent, 15 percent, 20 percent is not
727 necessarily going to be fit to purpose for all circumstances.

728 So each of the activities undertaken through the plan or
729 otherwise is going to set a goal that makes sense context
730 specifically.

731 Ms. Lawrence. So are you reaching any of those goals?

732 Ms. Reaser. Yes, many of those goals have been reached
733 through this process.

734 Ms. Lawrence. One of the things that the plan, it is my
735 understanding that we as members of Congress should know that
736 the plan is being updated, and I can tell you that has not

737 been a reality. So you are saying, you are making a
738 commitment here today that your plan will be updated by the
739 spring of next year. And I expect that we will know that
740 that has happened under your leadership. Is that correct?

741 Ms. Reaser. I am willing to be personally accountable
742 on that one. There are not many things that I can promise
743 you, but that one I can assure you under my leadership will
744 happen as soon as it is feasibly possible.

745 Ms. Lawrence. I am going to have to come back for
746 another round of questions, but I do want to ask this. With
747 your knowledge now that you are in the position, do you have
748 the funds or the resources to actively, once we get a plan,
749 to implement it and to be able to state to Congress and to
750 the people of the United States that we have a very proactive
751 and committed plan to addressing the Invasive Species Act?

752 And I love the comparison made between endangered
753 species. I think we get a lot of attention and affection
754 when we start talking about endangered species where you need
755 to really talk about the invasive species because that is a
756 major component of why we have endangered. So when you
757 submit the plan, will you be able to implement it with your
758 budget and resources?

759 Ms. Reaser. That is a very good and pertinent question.

760 We will make sure that where we have good alignment with
761 current resources that will be well recognized. There may be
762 cases where there is an action item in the plan to mobilize
763 additional resources or find efficiencies with existing
764 resources, and we will also work to identify that as well.

765 Ms. Lawrence. You are not willing to say if you have it
766 yet or not because that is what you are saying.

767 Ms. Reaser. We have not finished the plan yet.

768 Ms. Lawrence. Okay.

769 Ms. Reaser. So it would be premature for me --

770 Ms. Lawrence. I will give you that.

771 Ms. Reaser. Thank you.

772 Ms. Lawrence. Thank you.

773 Mr. Buck. I thank the lady from Michigan, and I
774 recognize the gentleman from Arizona.

775 Mr. Gosar. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Now, Dr. Reaser,
776 the Lower Colorado River is in the frontlines of battling the
777 quagga mussel. So, Dr. Steinman, we join you, and the salt
778 cedar. The mussels threaten the Hoover Dam, the Davis Dam,
779 Parker Dam, Imperial Dam, and the Central Arizona Project,
780 all of which are part of my district in Arizona. These water
781 systems supply electricity and drinking water to millions
782 across the Southwest.

783 Now, while the problem is massive in scale, its
784 implications are felt locally and require local action to
785 mitigate their spread. Municipal leaders and community
786 organizations in my district, such as the Lake Havasu
787 Submarine Association, are prepared and willing to do their
788 part, but need resources to do so.

789 So my first question. What specific authorizations
790 currently exist for funding mitigation programs that combat
791 these mussels or salt cedars on a State or local level?

792 Ms. Reaser. Thank you for the question. I do not have
793 specific information available on those authorities, but I
794 would be happy to make that information available to you.

795 [The information follows:]

796

797 Mr. Gosar. I would like to get them because I think the
798 gentleman, Dr. Beck, was making this comment. We have a lot
799 of surface activity, but nothing down on the local level, and
800 it is imperative that we leverage those resources.

801 I would also like to know what type of flexibility
802 exists with matching funds from local, and States, and
803 private partnerships for these authorizations. Do you have
804 that either?

805 Ms. Reaser. Thank you for the question. I am going to
806 invite Anne Kinsinger to address the answer.

807 Ms. Kinsinger. I do not have a comprehensive answer on
808 that, but I did want to note that the Fish and Wildlife
809 Service does work to coordinate the development of State
810 wildlife action plans. And when a species is listed as a
811 species of management concern in those plans, then grants are
812 available. So I do not think that is the full answer, so I
813 think we will need to get back to you with some other
814 authorities. But that is a major --

815 Mr. Gosar. I would like to know that.

816 Ms. Kinsinger. Yes.

817 [The information follows:]

818

819 Mr. Gosar. Stay right there. I am going to jump ahead
820 here. So according to Executive Order 131112, NISC is
821 charged with producing a national management plan every 2
822 years that sets forth its goals for treating and eradicating
823 invasive species. However, since 1999, NISC has only
824 released two management plans, those in 2001 and 2008. Can
825 you please explain why there has been such a delay in
826 producing a management plan, and when does NISC plan to
827 produce a national management plan?

828 Ms. Reaser. Thank you for the question. To make it
829 short since I have answered a version of this already, the
830 management plan between 2014 -- that is when the second
831 management plan sunsetted -- sorry -- between 2012, and this
832 management plan, there has been a process in place to
833 identify which items in the second management plan need to be
834 moved forward to the third management plan. A number of
835 items are ongoing understandably. Also --

836 Mr. Gosar. I get that, and I see the gentleman over
837 here just wriggling, which is what I am doing, is that there
838 is so much bureaucracy up here, there is nothing trickling
839 down to the local levels. And this is what is frustrating
840 about this is that we always have to set goals. We have to
841 have objectives, and then we have to have outcomes. And if

842 we do not have people on the local level included in those,
843 we are never going anywhere.

844 And this is what is so frustrating with these groups. I
845 have got salt cedars on one side. I have got quagga mussels
846 everywhere. I have bison in the Yellowstone National area in
847 the Grand Canyon. This is frustrating when you are talking
848 about invasive species because you have people with expertise
849 and the manpower and willpower to do this, but they cannot
850 get any jurisdiction or leverage coming out of your
851 Department. Does that make sense to you?

852 Ms. Reaser. I certainly understand and concur with your
853 frustrations in terms of the priority of getting resources to
854 the ground --

855 Mr. Gosar. Yes, but it is even worse than that because
856 not just getting the resources. But these plans seem to get
857 lost in your bureaucracy that are well intentioned and have
858 great outcomes, but they cannot get any jurisdiction to say
859 we are going to work with you, let us move forward with this
860 plan. I mean, it is just absolutely ludicrous with the folks
861 back home what is going on with this.

862 Ms. Reaser. I understand your concerns, and they are
863 warranted. This is a substantial issue of concern that
864 deserves priority attention. I can assure you that the third

865 management plan will be available early next year.

866 Mr. Gosar. Well, I will have to stay. I am running out
867 of time. I will stay --

868 Mr. Buck. The chair thanks the gentleman from Arizona.
869 I just want to make one thing clear. Dr. Reaser, I want to
870 make sure we have the correct spelling of the assisted
871 witness in this matter. If you could just spell your name
872 for the record, I would appreciate it.

873 Ms. Kinsinger. Yes, I am Anne Kinsinger. That is Anne
874 with an "E." Last name K-i-n-s-i-n-g-e-r.

875 Mr. Buck. Thank you very much. And the chair now
876 recognizes the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands for 5
877 minutes.

878 Ms. Plaskett. Thank you, Madam Chair, and Ranking
879 Member Lawrence. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and I
880 am so appreciative of you coming here to discuss this issue.
881 Invasive species affect our economy, our environment, human
882 health in many instances.

883 And although we have not focused on it today, and I did
884 not hear it in your testimonies, invasive species, such as
885 lionfish, brown tree snake, and even invasive Sargassum
886 seaweed, have had a devastating effect on all aspects of the
887 economic development, agricultural production, and tourism,

888 particularly in my district in the United States Virgin
889 Islands, and in some parts of southeastern United States.

890 I note that several of my colleagues from Florida have
891 introduced legislation related to the lionfish, which are an
892 invasive, voracious eating species that is not native to the
893 waters in which they have come, and have completely attempted
894 in their eating habits to annihilate our own local fish. And
895 our fishermen are up in arms. Our Department of Planning and
896 Natural Resources are trying to create ways to deal with this
897 invasive species both in the Virgin Island, Puerto Rico, and
898 particularly in areas of Florida as well.

899 And there has been success in controlling a few of the
900 invasive species, but it is clear you all are completely
901 aware that we need to do more. Ms. Reaser, according to the
902 submitted testimony, you have taken on some really important
903 initiatives. And one of those initiatives is to focus on
904 national priorities and targeted outputs. I wanted to know
905 if you could tell us what the national priorities are, and
906 what do you mean by "targeted outputs?" And specifically, of
907 course, you know, my interest would be if the territories are
908 included in those priorities.

909 Ms. Reaser. Certainly the territories are explicitly
910 included in the work we are doing, and thank you for

911 highlighting them. And in particular, they do face many
912 challenges that are particular to island regions. As you are
913 probably well aware, invasive species are one of the number
914 one threats to biodiversity in island context, and that has
915 certainly been the case in the U.S. territories.

916 The national priorities are set within the Native
917 Invasive Species Management Plan in terms of how the Federal
918 government is going to work together, but also with States,
919 territories, tribes, and other partners. So each management
920 plan sets forward a new set of priorities, and so we will
921 have a new set early this next year.

922 Ms. Plaskett. And how is that determined, in what way?
923 Is it by population? Is it based on economic determinants?
924 What sets those priorities?

925 Ms. Reaser. Anne Kinsinger would like to address that.

926 Ms. Kinsinger. Okay. Hi. I just wanted to say I am
927 not speaking to what will be in the plan, but that there are
928 a number of scientifically-based techniques that we can use.
929 One of them is model the invasivity of the animal once it is
930 detected and try to get a sense of how quickly it will
931 spread, and try to be able to understand what kind of impacts
932 it is going to have, because there are many invasive species
933 that come to the country and really do not cause much

934 damages, do not spread very quickly.

935 So we have a variety of tools that we are trying to use
936 that managers and policy makers can deploy to understand how
937 quickly and how damaging from both an ecological and an
938 economic perspective.

939 Ms. Plaskett. Because the reason I was asking what are
940 the benchmarks and how do you determine that is more often
941 than not, in my area of the Virgin Islands, because it is
942 seen that we are small in numbers, we are not given the
943 priorities. And I just wanted to share something with the
944 committee today, and I am asking that we show this picture,
945 and I will pass this around.

946 That this is what happens when the invasive species, the
947 Sargassum seaweed, which if you think about an island economy
948 that is based on fishing and tourism, if that is sitting on
949 your beach, it is going to affect your tourism tremendously
950 on a regular basis. And that is on every beach in the Virgin
951 Islands these last couple of months. So thank you, and I
952 would ask unanimous consent to include this in the record.

953 And I just wanted to then close with, and I know I am
954 running out of time. Mr. Beck, if you could tell us if you
955 feel that there needs to be a change and improvement in
956 controlling this and how we set these priorities.

957 Mr. Beck. I am not familiar with the seaweed problem
958 other than I am just aware that it exists, so I am not the
959 expert to ask on that. But if we do not have the
960 information, it needs to be dealt with immediately. That
961 seems to be the case with almost every new invasive species,
962 you know. Where are we scientifically on it?

963 That is an excellent question to ask, and I think we
964 need to address these species unfortunately one at a time,
965 but that is part of the challenge in this. And they all need
966 to be addressed.

967 Mr. Buck. With no objection, the picture will be
968 included in the record.

969 [The information follows:]

970

971 Mr. Buck. And I would just mention to the gentlelady from
972 the Virgin Island that Dr. Beck and I live close to each
973 other, and we would be glad to go to the Virgin Islands this
974 time of year to look at the seaweed and --

975 Ms. Plaskett. Immediately.

976 Mr. Buck. Yes, immediately. Great. The chair
977 recognizes the gentleman from Arizona for 5 minutes.

978 Mr. Gosar. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Dr. Reaser, we are
979 going to come back again to Arizona. And as you know, the
980 Tamarisk salt cedar has been spread throughout the Colorado
981 River Basin. It has been especially damaging to areas in
982 Arizona in my district along the Gila River. These invasive
983 and thirsty shrubs steal already limited water to push out
984 native plants, strain agricultural resources, and disrupt
985 economic activity.

986 In communities where the Tamarisk invasion has developed
987 into crisis, like Buckeye Arizona on the Gila River, local
988 and State leaders have developed action plans to eradicate
989 the shrub and restore natural habitats. However, these
990 mitigation plans, like I alluded to earlier, have gotten lost
991 in the complicated web of Federal invasive species policy, or
992 have been flat out resisted by the Federal agencies
993 themselves.

994 So what NISC done to engage communities and to empower
995 them to leverage the local resources and expertise to address
996 problems unique to their area?

997 Ms. Reaser. Thank you for the question. To clarify,
998 NISC itself is the Secretaries' and administrators --

999 Mr. Gosar. I understand.

1000 Ms. Reaser. -- of the 13 member Departments. So they
1001 themselves would not be having a direct relationship
1002 coordinating with the counties. However, many of the Federal
1003 agency personnel working in that region have been involved in
1004 multi-stakeholder partnerships. You are familiar, I am sure,
1005 with the Tamarisk Coalition.

1006 Mr. Gosar. Yes.

1007 Ms. Reaser. And through those on the ground efforts at
1008 better communication and coordination, requests for
1009 assistance, individual priority setting, information,
1010 exercises, and so forth are brought up through the Federal
1011 agencies.

1012 Mr. Gosar. So now, is there any benefit or streamlining
1013 to this process in coordination with American Indian tribes?

1014 Ms. Reaser. Thank you for the question. Are you
1015 referring to the work with Tamarisk in particular or with --

1016 Mr. Gosar. With any invasive species, but in this case

1017 Tamarisk, yes.

1018 Ms. Reaser. Thank you for the question. I cannot
1019 answer specifically with regard to Tamarisk. I can answer
1020 more broadly if that is of interest.

1021 Mr. Gosar. Sure.

1022 Ms. Reaser. Okay. So within the framework of the
1023 Invasive Species Advisory Committee that I mentioned
1024 previously, there are two seats dedicated for tribal
1025 representatives. There have been five tribal individuals who
1026 have filled those seats to date. The tribes are also
1027 included in numerous specific actions that are implemented
1028 under the National Invasive Species Management Plan. They
1029 may participate in specific committees, working groups, or
1030 task teams of particular interest to the tribes.

1031 The most recent example would be the outreach to tribes
1032 and inclusion of tribal representatives and the development
1033 of the early detection and rapid response framework that will
1034 be released in the near future.

1035 Mr. Gosar. Well, but my question is, is there any
1036 mechanism in which that can streamline? I mean, they have
1037 jurisdictions that are synonymous as a sovereign entity if it
1038 exists on their property. Is there is a streamlining
1039 mechanism? Not just representation, but is there a

1040 streamlining possibility in utilizing the tribes within a
1041 problem?

1042 Ms. Reaser. Thank you for the question. The tribes
1043 themselves have not brought to our attention a request for
1044 that process. If they did, I think we would take into
1045 consideration to look at ways to coordinate better. We
1046 certainly would welcome more tribal participation at all
1047 levels of the work within the NISC and the broader NISC
1048 framework.

1049 Mr. Gosar. Gotcha. Dr. Beck, I mean, you have seen
1050 this from the ground level. How would you orchestrate
1051 something in a comprehensive management plan that addresses
1052 the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands, to Arizona, to the
1053 Great Lakes so that we have all these multiple applications
1054 going on? I mean, you are with CSU, right?

1055 Mr. Beck. Yes, sir.

1056 Mr. Gosar. I have got ASU, U of A, NAU. I mean, they
1057 are a pretty good resource out there. But how would you
1058 manage a plan like that from your level that would address a
1059 lot of these things and synchronize them that may not be so
1060 bureaucratically top down driven?

1061 Mr. Beck. Well, first, I think is to involve people at
1062 the local level. What do they want to do? What is their

1063 land use vision, and then adapt from there. And then
1064 geographically you have to start up to the high elevation,
1065 high waters, and then move downstream from there rather than
1066 trying to move up. I have seen it go both ways, and it never
1067 works when you try to run upstream. But at any rate,
1068 visiting and getting input from the local community is
1069 absolutely essential. That is the starting place.

1070 Mr. Gosar. I know we have been chasing the mussels
1071 upstream up to Colorado, so we know your plight there,
1072 absolutely.

1073 Mr. Beck. Yes, sir.

1074 Mr. Gosar. One last question. Dr. Steinman, would you
1075 have any other comments in regards to that process?

1076 Mr. Steinman. Well, I think the coordination is
1077 essential. Without that, things are going to break down. As
1078 I mentioned in the oral testimony, written testimony, these
1079 invasive species cross jurisdictional boundaries. Any time
1080 you have these connected systems, the weakest link provides
1081 the problem there. So it is essential that people work
1082 together and have a coordinated effort and based on science
1083 is really going to be a critical element to make things
1084 successful.

1085 Mr. Gosar. When you empower local people, you find

1086 people more adaptive to be protecting, right?

1087 Mr. Steinman. Absolutely, and I agree with Dr. Beck in
1088 the sense that if you do not what their social values are at
1089 that local land value, you know, you are just not going to
1090 make a difference.

1091 Mr. Gosar. Thank you.

1092 Mr. Buck. The chair thanks the gentleman from Arizona,
1093 and recognizes the gentlelady from Michigan.

1094 Ms. Lawrence. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Mr. Cameron, I
1095 just want to ask a follow-up question. How do you feel the
1096 NISC, from your organization, how effective is it? You gave
1097 some recommendations. Does the plan drive the results? I
1098 would like to hear your opinion.

1099 Mr. Cameron. Thank you. Thank you, Congressman. A
1100 couple of thoughts. The first is a plan is ultimately just a
1101 piece of paper. What you really need is commitment at least
1102 at the assistant secretary level. More than a commitment,
1103 active participation. You need assistant secretaries willing
1104 to spend 15 percent of their time worried about invasive
1105 species. Frankly, I do not think we have had that for quite a
1106 while. You need that leadership in order to drive
1107 coordination inside Washington in order to provide air cover,
1108 if you will, for the people at the regional level, at the

1109 State level who are trying to do the right thing. So a good
1110 plan is helpful, it is necessary, but it is by no means
1111 sufficient.

1112 What I think is really important, echoing some things we
1113 have heard before, is taking a lot of hints from the
1114 governors. Your own governor is really invested in the
1115 invasive species issues even with Michigan's economic
1116 problems. He has budget increases in the State budget for
1117 invasives. Governor Hickenlooper has been all over the
1118 cheatgrass issue from the very beginning in Colorado.

1119 So the Federal government needs to pay attention to
1120 where the governors are coming from. The Federal government
1121 can provide a forum for cooperation among the governors. The
1122 Great Lakes Restoration Initiative in your part of the
1123 country, Ms. Lawrence, is one example of a fairly successful
1124 model. Maybe WGA could do the same on cheatgrass, for
1125 instance.

1126 Ms. Lawrence. Well, Dr. Steinman, I introduced H.R.
1127 1900, the National Sea Grant College Program. And we know it
1128 is administered within the National Oceanic Administration,
1129 NOAA. Do you believe that Congress should reauthorize it and
1130 fund new university research, because one of the things that
1131 I am hearing, and who made the quote about good science

1132 versus good policy. So would you please comment on that?

1133 Mr. Steinman. Thank you, Representative Lawrence. I am
1134 a strong supporter of the National Sea Grant Program
1135 administered under NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
1136 Administration. It is really where the science, education,
1137 and outreach all come together on a local basis. And even
1138 though National Sea Grant seems to have a marine name to it,
1139 it applies to the gentlelady as well.

1140 And so, whether it is fresh water, salt water, or
1141 estuarian systems, Sea Grant is really there at the local
1142 level making a difference educating people and providing the
1143 science to help inform those management decisions that need
1144 to be made.

1145 Ms. Lawrence. You know, one of the things that I really
1146 want to drive this point home is that we think about just
1147 fish in the water. But there is an additional effect of the
1148 zebra mussel, an increase of blue water algae, which resulted
1149 in the loss of drinking water to 400,000 Ohio citizens. Can
1150 you explain how this invasive species has an impact on our
1151 drinking water?

1152 Mr. Steinman. Yes, thank you for the question. So the
1153 zebra and quagga mussels, as I said, are filter feeders, so
1154 they are filtering out the organisms that are in the water.

1155 And by doing that, they are clearing the water, and as they
1156 clear the water, there is more opportunity for the blue-green
1157 algae or cyanobacteria to start to form in that system.

1158 Now, it also needs nutrients as well as the light that
1159 is getting through the water. The nutrients particularly in
1160 the Western Basin of Lake Erie were coming off of farm
1161 fields. You had that combination of fertilizer application,
1162 a big rainstorm that moved it all into the lake. And then
1163 you had enough light for the blue-greens to grow the
1164 cyanobacteria, and because they release a toxin, in this case
1165 microcystins, which is toxic to humans, potentially toxic.
1166 That is what Toledo Water Supply just decided to shut down.

1167 Now, we have had algae blooms that are actually larger
1168 than the one last year that shut down the water supply, but
1169 it turned out that they did not grow near where the water
1170 intakes were. So really it makes a difference where those
1171 blooms are forming, but that combination does create
1172 something.

1173 And I want to point out for Ms. Plaskett as well that
1174 clearing of the water by the quagga and zebra mussels also
1175 results in a proliferation of what we call these green algae,
1176 filamentous green algae called cladophora, very similar to
1177 your Sargassum that is washing up on the beaches of the Great

1178 Lakes and creating what we call muck. And nobody wants to go
1179 where that muck is. Just like in the Virgin Islands, we are
1180 seeing the same thing in the Great Lakes.

1181 Ms. Lawrence. I know I only have a few seconds, but,
1182 Dr. Reaser, this is where I want to connect your job with
1183 these immediate. So when we have an invasive species
1184 affecting drinking water, how does these issues rise to the
1185 level of you responding or being able to respond to this?
1186 And when you have a situation of Virgin Islands, and everyone
1187 sitting here are likely to know what is happening, how do we
1188 as a member of Congress know that you are actually responding
1189 in attacking this, not just a report.

1190 But what is your action? And I am sorry, sir, I know I
1191 am over, but this is important.

1192 Ms. Reaser. It is important, and thank you for the
1193 question. To clarify again, NISC itself is the Secretaries
1194 and administrators of the 13 member departments. And in many
1195 cases, issues such as this do not necessarily have to rise to
1196 that level to get action. There are hopefully mechanisms in
1197 place in most States and in some territories where there are
1198 State-level national invasive species councils. There are
1199 also plant councils and aquatic councils, and they can work
1200 to bring local levels to State-level attention. State-level

1201 attention can then be brought to Federal partners and so
1202 forth.

1203 And hopefully at the appropriate level, we are getting
1204 response, whether that is a technical-level response, an
1205 authority-level response, or some other mechanism that needs
1206 to be put in place to assist. So ultimately the response
1207 comes through partnerships and communications on up.

1208 Ms. Lawrence. Thank you. Thank you for your
1209 indulgence, Mr. Chair.

1210 Mr. Buck. The chair thanks the gentlelady from
1211 Michigan, and recognizes the gentleman from Texas.

1212 Mr. Hurd. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I appreciate our
1213 panelists being here today.

1214 Dr. Reaser, in your opening remarks, I appreciate how
1215 you brought a context to this issue in how it is a national
1216 security issue. That is something, you know, I know a little
1217 something about. I spent 9 years as an undercover officer in
1218 the CIA chasing al Qaeda and the Taliban, you know, Iranian
1219 and IRGC Quds force. And it is great being able to use those
1220 talents and experience, you know, going after invasive weeds
1221 and worms. It is an important issue to the State of Texas.
1222 In Texas we are dealing with the branched broomrape. We are
1223 dealing with the Old World boll worm. We are dealing with

1224 cheatgrass as well.

1225 And, you know, we have talked here today, and I guess my
1226 first question is more a philosophical question. We have
1227 talked here today about how invasive species pose one of the
1228 greatest threats to the agriculture industries in the world,
1229 yet are the least funded and recognized. How can we change
1230 this mentality to become more proactive in protecting our
1231 industries?

1232 Ms. Reaser. Thank you for the question. I think it is
1233 a really good one, and something that deserves a lot more
1234 time than what we have available to us. I think one of the
1235 challenges that has existed within this issue I the
1236 agricultural context is the long history of using the word
1237 "pest" and "weeds," which do not galvanize the public's
1238 emotive response to this issue.

1239 A lot of people equate "weeds" to dandelions, which are
1240 in their background and they do not feel are particularly
1241 threatening. The invasive species issue itself, because of
1242 examples that have been emerging from around the world, is
1243 getting more of the public's perspective on the real risks
1244 associated with these non-native organizations, impacting
1245 them personally.

1246 And I think as we raise the profile of this issue, as we

1247 communicate case studies effectively, as we draw the
1248 relationships between these individual species and people's
1249 personal lives, whether that be in the agricultural context
1250 or otherwise, we will see additional calls for support in all
1251 sorts of ways -- financial, technical, and otherwise.

1252 The human dimensions of this issue are of particular
1253 interest to me, and I would love to have a side conversation
1254 with you at another date if that is of interest to you.

1255 Mr. Hurd. It is of interest, and I appreciate that.
1256 And also in some of the specifics not only in how do we
1257 educate, you know, folks about how critical of an issue this
1258 is, the Old World boll worm poses a significant threat to
1259 corn, cotton, and other important crops throughout the U.S.
1260 And given that it reached Brazil and Puerto Rico, and that in
1261 June of this year one worm was found in Florida, is there a
1262 Federal protocol in place for an effective response to
1263 eliminate any isolated infestations before the pest spreads
1264 and becomes established in the U.S.?

1265 Ms. Reaser. Thank you for the question. I am not an
1266 expert on that species in particular. I know that USDA has
1267 been working on eradicating the Texas boll weevil, if, in
1268 fact, we are talking about the same species, and that that
1269 work has been mostly successful. I would like to follow up

1270 with you more specifically at a later date when I can get the
1271 specifics in front of me.

1272 Mr. Hurd. Great. I appreciate that and would welcome
1273 that. And my last question, there has been some
1274 conversations already on cheatgrass. The latest research
1275 suggests that targeting grazing and optimum times, either
1276 before the seed polyyps develop or after they drop, produces
1277 recurrence on rangelands more than anything else we have
1278 tried. An given the tremendous wildfire issues and
1279 detrimental effects of sage grouse habitat associated with
1280 cheatgrass, should not research like this be a priority, and
1281 what are agencies doing to coordinate their efforts to
1282 streamline unnecessary environmental reviews for pilot
1283 projects and trials?

1284 Ms. Reaser. So, two different answers. Thank you for
1285 the questions. In terms of the grazing question in
1286 particular, there are nuances to the grazing that need to be
1287 looked at from a research perspective. There are a number of
1288 criteria that go into determining whether grazing is an
1289 effective technique in terms of managing cheatgrass. Those
1290 relate to the history of the land use, in particular, the
1291 condition of the land.

1292 The micro climate that you are looking at, whether you

1293 are talking about grazing with cattle versus sheep, the
1294 density of the animals, even the breed of the animals, can
1295 make a difference in terms of grazing habits. So there is
1296 various work going on to look at best possible strategies for
1297 managing cheatgrass, and they may vary across and likely will
1298 vary across the landscape.

1299 To get to the second part of your question, which I am
1300 going to ask you to repeat.

1301 Mr. Hurd. Sure. It is, you know, what are agencies
1302 doing to coordinate efforts to streamline unnecessary
1303 environmental reviews for pilot projects and initial trials?

1304 Ms. Reaser. Great. Apologies. Thank you for that.
1305 One of the priorities that emerged out of the Western
1306 Invasive Weed Summit that I attended two weeks ago was
1307 streamlining the NEPA process. This has been a priority for
1308 us for a number of years at this point in time, and we are
1309 going to continue to move ahead on looking at what we could
1310 do to provide better NEPA guidance and streamlining in the
1311 invasive species context into the New Year.

1312 Mr. Hurd. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the time I do not
1313 have.

1314 [Laughter.]

1315 Mr. Buck. The chairman thanks the gentleman from Texas,

1316 and recognizes the gentlelady from the Virgin Islands.

1317 Ms. Plaskett. Thank you. Thank you so much. I just
1318 wanted to go back to something that we were talking about,
1319 and that the ranking, Ms. Lawrence, brought up. When you
1320 talked about this is layering, and the responses that come
1321 from the local level, to the State level, to the Federal
1322 level. You also talked about the management plan, and I know
1323 it is the specific task and the mandate of this group to
1324 really set those kind of guidelines and those prioritizations
1325 out.

1326 Can you give me an example of how this has worked in
1327 some of these invasive species? In your written testimony
1328 you talked about the Asian carp. You talked about
1329 cheatgrass. You know, we have given the example about the
1330 lionfish. How has this worked to address some of these
1331 issues of some of these specific invasive species issues?

1332 Ms. Reaser. Thank you for the question. You are
1333 particularly interested in the coordination mechanisms and
1334 the --

1335 Ms. Plaskett. Well, I am just trying to find out some
1336 specificity because I just hear a lot of very general
1337 discussion about how the process works, and that the
1338 management plans are there to make this happen. But I have

1339 not heard -- maybe it was done -- what specific examples you
1340 have of where this has worked and where the organization,
1341 when this group has actually made it effective against some
1342 of these invasive species.

1343 Ms. Reaser. Okay. So I want to clarify once again that
1344 the National Invasive Species Council is itself the
1345 Secretary's and administrators of the 13-member Federal
1346 Department. So when we start moving onto discussions about
1347 impacts on the ground, we are looking at the engagement at
1348 the Agency level and Agency personnel.

1349 Ms. Plaskett. Right, but you set those. You set those
1350 priorities in that national plan and the management of how
1351 that is going to be done, is that not right, in your
1352 coordination of all of these agencies.

1353 Ms. Reaser. The management plan sets out a series of
1354 actions to be taken over the life of the management plan.

1355 Ms. Plaskett. And the management plan is how, in fact,
1356 these agencies are going to attack these invasive species
1357 issues, right?

1358 Ms. Reaser. The management plan sets out goals and
1359 objectives for achieving certain things. It is not
1360 prescriptive in telling the agencies how specifically to move
1361 forward on that particular action.

1362 Ms. Plaskett. But it sets out guidelines for these
1363 agencies on how this is supposed to be done? That is a yes
1364 or a no. Does it?

1365 Ms. Reaser. It sets out priority actions. It does not
1366 explicitly set out guidelines.

1367 Ms. Plaskett. So in setting the priorities for them,
1368 can you give me an example of how those priorities have not
1369 been set since this group has been made, how it has been
1370 effective in the invasive species fight?

1371 Ms. Reaser. Okay. So I can give you a specific example
1372 for what is happening on the ground right now within the work
1373 that is being done on cheatgrass. Under a second --

1374 Ms. Plaskett. Is that the only way you are able to tell
1375 me what it is working on? You are not able to tell me what
1376 has been done and what has been effective in the past as yet?

1377 Ms. Reaser. I can go through a number of action items
1378 in the plan. There are 170 various action items, and I can
1379 go through with you at a later date --

1380 Ms. Plaskett. Are there too many action items?

1381 Ms. Reaser. Pardon?

1382 Ms. Plaskett. Are there too many action items maybe?
1383 If I give my kids too many chores, they will never get any of
1384 them completed.

1385 Ms. Reaser. I understand your concern with the number
1386 of activities and the action items, and I can assure you in
1387 the next management plan --

1388 Ms. Plaskett. I am not concerned. You just cited so
1389 many of them as a reason you are not able to tell me which
1390 ones they have completed.

1391 Ms. Reaser. Well, I can pull out the two management
1392 plans at the moment, and I could go through them with you.
1393 We do not have time obviously to do that right now. It is
1394 something we could sit down and do together.

1395 Ms. Plaskett. I just asked for one example.

1396 Ms. Reaser. So one example in the management plan was
1397 to provide resources to develop an international
1398 infrastructure for sharing information on invasive species.
1399 A number of activities actually have taken place to result in
1400 that. The Global Invasive Species Information Network was
1401 created that is housed by the U.S. Geological Survey.

1402 We have also contributed resources to setting up a
1403 global database. You could call it a global encyclopedia
1404 through an organization known as CAVI. That provides
1405 information that can be used in the agricultural sector, in
1406 the environmental sector, and otherwise to inform decision
1407 making, such as risk analyses and risk assessments on the

1408 invasive species issue.

1409 Ms. Plaskett. And any of these, have you been able to
1410 show where the action items, the action that has been taken,
1411 has actually scaled back the invasive species, or what the
1412 impact that those have had on the particular areas that they
1413 have affected?

1414 Ms. Reaser. At this point in time, without actually
1415 going to the agencies and asking for that particular data --

1416 Ms. Plaskett. Can you ask? That is the ultimate goal
1417 of the group. Would that not be something that you would
1418 know immediately to be able to say that what you have been
1419 working on all these years, this is the outcome and this is
1420 how we have been able to beat back this national crisis, this
1421 national security issue?

1422 Ms. Reaser. I understand your concern, and if the
1423 management plan action items were specifically targeted
1424 towards an on the ground response, that would be feasible,
1425 and I collect that information.

1426 Many of the items in the management plan are actually
1427 focused on enhancing coordination, cooperation, efficiencies,
1428 and resource spending, partnerships with States and tribal
1429 governments.

1430 Ms. Plaskett. And is not all of that the ultimate goal

1431 to eradicate the invasive species?

1432 Ms. Reaser. They are all creating the enabling
1433 environment to allow that to happen.

1434 Ms. Plaskett. Dr. Reaser, that is just yes or no. Is
1435 not that the ultimate goal of the organization is to do that?

1436 Ms. Reaser. The ultimate goal of --

1437 Ms. Plaskett. Yes? No?

1438 Ms. Reaser. -- the National Invasive Species Council is
1439 to facilitate coordination and cooperation of specific duties
1440 that are outlined in the executive order.

1441 Ms. Plaskett. To what end?

1442 Ms. Reaser. Ultimately to the end of preventing, and
1443 controlling --

1444 Ms. Plaskett. So the answer would be --

1445 Ms. Reaser. -- and eradicating invasive species.
1446 However, the activities are often many steps removed from
1447 what is happening on the ground. So the ability to say we
1448 have created an invasive species database is creating an
1449 enabling environment to enable people on the ground, whether
1450 that is cheatgrass, or zebra mussels, or weevils in Texas, to
1451 make a difference.

1452 However, being able to say that the data in that
1453 database directly resulted in 300 infestations being

1454 intercepted in the field is understandably quite difficult.

1455 Ms. Plaskett. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

1456 Mr. Buck. The chair thanks the gentlelady from the
1457 Virgin Islands, and recognizes the gentleman from Alabama.

1458 Mr. Palmer. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would like
1459 to thank the witnesses for being here and for their
1460 testimony.

1461 I have got a question about how some of these invasive
1462 species enter the country, and I just want to ask, Dr.
1463 Reaser, I know that the Department of Agriculture and
1464 Department of Interior are involved. But is there an ongoing
1465 discussion about, for instance, sportsmen have brought in
1466 certain plants that they think are good for wildlife that
1467 have turned out not so well. This has been the case in
1468 Alabama.

1469 And I think as we talk about how to deal with the
1470 invasive species who are already here, we need to be talking
1471 about how we can prevent some of them from being brought into
1472 the country. Can you tell me what kind of activity takes
1473 place, what kind of discussions, what kind of strategic
1474 planning is going on to prevent that?

1475 Ms. Reaser. Thank you for the question. We generally
1476 discuss these in the context of pathway interdiction and

1477 prevention at the border. And I am sure you are well aware,
1478 there are numerous controls in place at our ports of entry
1479 both on the agricultural side and on the wildlife and human
1480 health side to intercept organisms before they come into the
1481 States. There also are mechanisms in place to interdict
1482 various pathways by which organisms may be introduced,
1483 whether that is through horticulture or other means.

1484 One of the ways in which we are adding value at this
1485 point in time is to increase our capacities for risk
1486 analysis, our ability to look at species before they come to
1487 the United States, and determining what is the likelihood of
1488 those organisms being harmful if they arrive here so that we
1489 can proactively make choices about which species to let in
1490 and which species to prohibit.

1491 Mr. Palmer. When these things are brought in, and there
1492 was, I think, it is an Asian version of oak trees that was
1493 brought in that a lot of people thought was a great idea for
1494 deer and wild turkey, have now decided that it is not. Is
1495 there any effort to limit the introduction of something like
1496 that so that you have got a 5-, 10-year period to determine
1497 if it is problematic? What is the process?

1498 Ms. Reaser. So ideally, risk analyses are informed by
1499 the best available science that you have. They also take

1500 other values and economic concerns into consideration. So if
1501 that or any organism became an issue of concern for
1502 importation into the United States, a risk analysis could
1503 take place, and it could determine based on the output of
1504 that risk analysis whether there were reasons to prohibit
1505 that organism, whatever it happened to be, and authorities in
1506 place to then follow up with the prohibition.

1507 Mr. Palmer. In the South, we have had to deal with an
1508 invasive species called kudzu. But we have also been dealing
1509 with an invasive weed called Cogan grass, and I think it came
1510 into the country as packing material. And, again, it gets
1511 back to the collaboration between the various Federal
1512 agencies and departments of government to make sure that if
1513 we bring something in, that it does not have the capacity,
1514 first of all, to reproduce, which I think that surprised a
1515 number of people when that happen.

1516 But in that regard, Dr. Beck, you are the weed
1517 specialist. What impact does the NEPA process have on the
1518 efforts to control the spread of invasive weeds like
1519 cheatgrass, and is it helping or hurting these efforts, or
1520 other things like cogon grass, for instance?

1521 Mr. Beck. My apologies. I did not hear the one word.
1522 My hearing is horrible. NEPA you said?

1523 Mr. Palmer. Right, NEPA. N-E-P-A.

1524 Mr. Beck. My experience personally with NEPA is with
1525 working with others that have had to do battle with it, and I
1526 guess that is the term that they would prefer to use. It can
1527 be an onerous process. It is by design meant to be thorough,
1528 but one does not have to take 10 years to make a decision.

1529 I think the process is good when it is used as it is
1530 supposed to be used, but unfortunately we run into situations
1531 where there seems to be a lot of misuse. In other words, the
1532 people who are making the assessment simply do not want
1533 something coming in, or they do not care, and it go could go
1534 either way. NEPA is a problem that needs to be addressed and
1535 streamlined.

1536 Mr. Palmer. My time has expired. Thank you, Mr.
1537 Chairman.

1538 Mr. Buck. The chair thanks the gentleman from Alabama,
1539 and recognizes the gentlelady from Michigan.

1540 Ms. Lawrence. I want to thank you all for being here.
1541 For my last set of questions, Mr. Cameron, I agree with your
1542 suggestion that Congress should direct the Council to furnish
1543 us with a short annual work plan to help focus attention on
1544 the Council's work. Ms. Reaser, do you have any objection to
1545 that suggestion?

1546 Ms. Reaser. Thank you for the question, and I
1547 appreciate the suggestion that Scott Cameron has brought
1548 forward. My request would be that any reporting be tied into
1549 the National Invasive Species Management Plan process so that
1550 the reporting on that can happen concurrently with any
1551 requests so that we are making sure that we are being
1552 efficient in our reporting processes.

1553 The current reporting for the National Invasive Species
1554 Management Plan is set at the executive order for 18 months
1555 after each management plan. And as we move forward, we
1556 intend to report out on that time frame.

1557 Ms. Lawrence. I would strongly recommend that as you
1558 are working on the plan, that you look at providing us with
1559 updates.

1560 I want to ask Dr. Steinman, what can the Federal
1561 government do to be helpful in your effort in curbing
1562 invasive species in the Great Lakes? What can the Federal
1563 government do? I am a little concerned that we have a plan
1564 that does not really cause action. It is a plan. So please
1565 tell me, what can we do?

1566 Mr. Steinman. Well, thank you, Representative Lawrence.
1567 It really depends on the vector that we are talking for
1568 introduction because there are so many ways that invasive

1569 species can get into the Great Lakes or into any ecosystem.
1570 So, again, that coordination is really critical if you are
1571 talking about species that are coming in from ballast water
1572 introduction. And it is critical that the EPA, the U.S.
1573 Coast Guard are all working together, the Canadian government
1574 as well as the U.S. government are working to make sure that
1575 none of these salties are discharging any of the ballast
1576 water organisms that would get in that way.

1577 But in many cases, some of these organisms are being
1578 introduced just by unintentional means or through the live
1579 aquaculture trade, and that is when USDA needs to come into
1580 play. So, again, it gets down to coordination. I know this
1581 is a common refrain we have been hearing, not just amongst
1582 the Federal government, although that is an important
1583 resource for us not just in terms of their management
1584 strategies, but in terms of resources, monetary resources.
1585 But then working with the State and local agencies as well to
1586 make sure that that plan once developed is coordinated and
1587 can be implemented in a rigorous way.

1588 Ms. Lawrence. Thank you so much. I want the panel to
1589 know, Dr. Reaser, that I am looking forward to that report
1590 and your leadership, but leadership is needed. All the
1591 members who have spoken here, we represent different parts of

1592 this country, and the issues that we are talking about, and
1593 we covered it. It is economic. It is our water quality. It
1594 is recreational. It is jobs. It is our economy. All these
1595 things are tied to this.

1596 And it seems like there has been this kind of whatever
1597 attitude, and under your leadership, and it is something that
1598 is going to be a priority for me as a member of Congress, is
1599 that we continue to put the focus and the energy. This is
1600 not a job to come in and just kind of sit on the side because
1601 nobody cares what you are doing. You have a tremendous
1602 background when you talk about your resume, and so you
1603 understand the impact of this.

1604 And this hearing to me is important because this is a
1605 major impact. You know, I am from the Great Lakes, but you
1606 heard Texas. You heard Florida. You heard the Islands.
1607 This is something that requires the commitment and the
1608 passion, and I am sitting here. I am looking forward to that
1609 leadership. I am going to be actively looking for that
1610 report.

1611 And this issue of coordinating the levels of government
1612 is extremely important, and I expect for the plan to lay out
1613 that process so that we have a process where at least there
1614 is a plan where if I am a governor, this is the layers and

1615 this is how we move forward, and there is a process for that.
1616 So I want to thank you all for you being here and your
1617 expertise.

1618 I yield back my time, sir.

1619 Mr. Buck. The chair thanks the gentlelady from
1620 Michigan. And in closing, I would like to thank our
1621 witnesses for taking the time to appear before us today.

1622 If there is no further business, without objection, the
1623 subcommittee stands adjourned.

1624 [Whereupon, at 4:06 p.m., the subcommittee was
1625 adjourned.]