

Congressman Darrell E. Issa (CA-49)

Testimony on H.R. 6147, to designate the exclusive economic zone of the United States as the "Ronald Wilson Reagan Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States"

September 10, 2012

I would like to start by thanking Chairman Fleming and Ranking Member Sablan for bringing up my bill H.R. 6147, the "Ronald Wilson Reagan Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States," for consideration. I would also like to thank Chairman Hastings and Ranking Member Markey, of the full committee.

On March 10, 1983 President Ronald Reagan nearly doubled the size of the United States with the stroke of his pen, at no cost to taxpayers, when he issued Proclamation 5030, establishing the United States Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The EEZ extends U.S. sovereignty over all waters, animals, the seabed and the subsoil, up to 200 nautical miles off America's coast, as well as off the coasts of Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands and other U.S. territories and possessions. The EEZ is consistent with domestic and international law, and ensures that the United States has sovereign rights for the purpose of exploring, exploiting, conserving, and managing living and nonliving resources off our coasts.

We currently have the largest EEZ in the world, spanning over 13,000 miles of coastline and reaching the Gulf of Mexico, Caribbean Sea, Atlantic Ocean, and Pacific Ocean. President Reagan appreciated that America is blessed with an abundance of natural resources and understood that to remain competitive and to promote strong economic growth, we need to effectively develop and responsibly make use of our natural wealth.

While policy debates about the management of our EEZ will certainly continue, the establishment of an EEZ is widely recognized around the world to be an essential component of marine conservation, resource management, and national competitiveness. As we strive to meet the challenges of maintaining our vast sovereign areas, we must also recognize the abundant opportunity that Ronald Reagan provided our nation when he first established our EEZ.

In closing, I would once again like to thank Chairman Fleming and Ranking Member Sablan for bringing this bill before the Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs and for the chance to be here. This legislation will honor President Reagan's leadership and foresight in protecting U.S. interests and I look forward to seeing this bill brought to the House floor and eventually signed into law.