

Congressional briefing held on ocean acidification

September 23, 2016

The Consortium for Ocean Leadership (COL) held a briefing on the economic impacts of ocean acidification (OA), or the process in which the ocean absorbs CO₂ from the atmosphere, making its pH slightly more acidic.

Before the briefing began, Congressman Sam Farr (D-CA) spoke about the importance of his bill, the Federal Ocean Acidification Research and Monitoring Act (H.R. 2717), in combating OA. Rep. Farr argued that the lack of attention on OA was a geographical issue, noting “There is no ocean policy in Midwestern states.” However, he emphasized the importance of preserving the ocean for aesthetic and conservation purposes for all.

During the briefing, three panelists presented their research on how OA affects various fisheries across the country. Dr. George G. Waldbusser from the University of Oregon discussed the effects on oyster fisheries in Washington State, Dr. Thomas Miller from the University of Maryland discussed the effects on blue crab populations in Maryland, and Dr. Dwight Glenhill discussed the effects on the commercial fishing and tourism industries in New England. All three panelists noted the detrimental impacts of OA on their respective fisheries, and agreed that unless something is done to combat OA, the fisheries will continue to decline.

Sources: Congress.gov, Consortium for Ocean Leadership
