



**Opening Statement**  
**Chairman Mike Coffman**  
**Committee on Small Business**  
**Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight, and Regulations**  
**Sinking the Marine Industry: How Regulations are Affecting Today's Maritime Businesses**  
**July 12, 2012**

Good morning. This hearing will come to order. Thank you all for joining us today as we examine federal policy and regulatory impediments for small businesses in the marine industry. I know that each of our witnesses have traveled quite a bit to be with us, and we here at the Committee appreciate that.

The coastal and inland water transportation system is often the economic lifeblood of the regions where they are located. A healthy and vibrant water transportation system is critical to the small businesses that directly use the system, as well as those who support those firms. While proven as being one of the most efficient and environmentally friendly methods of transporting goods across the country, an aging system of locks, dams, and undredged channels threatens the continued viability of these waterways as reliable shipping avenues.

It is not just the regular wear and tear on these avenues that is negatively impacting the small businesses that utilize them. State and federal policies and regulatory impediments also threaten the continued viability of these long-standing industries. We will hear numerous examples today from our witnesses on these issues.

This hearing represents a forum for us to hear firsthand how important the maritime industry is to our nation and the problems that are preventing economic growth. Again, I want to thank each of our witnesses for taking the time to be with us today. Unfortunately, I have an unavoidable scheduling conflict and must leave the hearing. I know that one of my colleagues has been working on issues facing the maritime industry since he came to Washington. I would ask that the gentleman from Florida, Mr. West, now chair this hearing.