

Chairman Russ Carnahan
Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight

Opening Statement

“U.S. Leadership in the International Whaling Commission and H.R. 2455, the International Whale Conservation and Protection Act of 2009”

May 6, 2010

I want to thank Chairman Delahunt of the Europe Subcommittee— also Vice-Chair of the International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight Subcommittee-- for his leadership on this issue, and for his work in organizing this hearing today. I also want to thank Chairman Faleomavaega of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment for his dedication to whale conservation and for agreeing to convene this joint hearing.

Earlier this year I launched the bipartisan American Engagement Caucus with Representative Joseph Cao (R-LA). Mr. Delahunt is also a member of this caucus. We believe that it is essential to have international cooperation and international institutions that work, in the economic, security, and environmental fields. The International Whaling Commission (IWC) is an example of an environmental institution which has struggled recently to achieve its core mission of research and addressing emerging threats to whales and their habitats. The United States needs to use all elements of “smart power” to engage with our partners, improve the IWC, and protect the environment.

I would like to ask that a letter from the St. Louis Zoo supporting this hearing be placed into the record. They say, “We hope the hearing will result in strong U.S. global leadership of whale conservation and protection and renew America’s commitment to whale conservation, especially within international fora such as the IWC.” I’m pleased to note that the St. Louis Zoo is celebrating its 100 year anniversary this year; the Zoo has done so much to promote awareness and conservation of so many animal species and their habitats.

Thank you again to Chairman Delahunt, Chairman Faleomavaega, and our esteemed witnesses.