



House of Representatives

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June 30, 2008

The Honorable Nick Rahall
Chairman
House Natural Resources Committee
US House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rahall:

As a Puerto Rican and as the highest ranking Latino Democrat in the State of Georgia -where I serve as State Representative- I write to express my strong opposition to HR5864, the "Vieques Bioluminescent Bay Conservation Act of 2008".

The people of the island of Vieques, Puerto Rico participated in a long and arduous struggle to get the U.S. Navy to leave their island after decades of bombing. The Navy finally left Vieques in May 2003. Much remains to be done by the federal government in terms of a prompt and full cleanup and decontamination as well as proper attention to the critical health situation of many Viequenses. The involvement by the federal government in these areas is a matter not just of legal but also moral responsibility towards the people of Vieques, who have suffered too much for too long.

Nonetheless, the proposed federalization of Vieques' Mosquito Bay, contemplated in HR5864 -which would turn the bay into a federal marine sanctuary- is unnecessary and flies in the face of Viequenses' desire toward retaining control of their natural resources and of regaining control of those lands currently in the hands of the federal government.

It is no surprise that HR5864 has encountered widespread opposition. I join those who have expressed their strong opposition to this bill.

Sincerely,

Pedro Marin
Representative
Georgia House of Representatives