

FRIENDS OF NOAA COALITION

<http://www.friendsofnoaa.org/>

March 16, 2007

Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice
and Science
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice
and Science
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Madam Chair Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby:

The undersigned organizations are supporters, stakeholders, unionized employees and partners of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Collectively we make up the Friends of NOAA Coalition and we are writing to strongly encourage you to provide the agency with a budget of \$4.5 billion in fiscal year 2008 – the same level as recommended by the Senate for fiscal years 2006 and 2007 and the same amount currently being recommended by the House Oceans Caucus.

NOAA is critical to protecting our ocean, coastal and Great Lakes resources, coastal communities, and the economy. In fact, weather and climate sensitive industries account for about one-third of the Nation's GDP. An investment of \$4.5 billion averages out to \$15 per person annually. For that small amount, each American receives weather forecasting, hurricane tracking, tsunami warnings, navigational information, fisheries management, hazard mitigation, scientific research, and local community assistance. NOAA affects and provides important services to all Americans and it is time for Congress to demonstrate its commitment to the NOAA programs that are vital to our economy and to the health and well being of every resident.

NOAA is also one of the premier science agencies in the Federal Government, providing decision makers with critically important data, products and services that promote and enhance the nation's economy, security, environment, and quality of life. For example, it was NOAA -- and its underlying science enterprise - that enabled the delivery of accurate and timely information regarding the impending landfall of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, a forecast that saved tens of thousands of lives. A better understanding of the oceans and improvements in forecasting not only benefits coastal communities – it benefits us all. For example, economists have estimated that altering planting decisions based on improved El Niño and La Niña forecasts would save U.S. farmers \$265-\$300 million.

The \$4.5 billion we are recommending for NOAA would fully fund the President's fiscal year 2008 budget request, including the priorities and initiatives contained in the interagency ocean research priorities plan and implementation strategy; restore funding for core programs, rebuild vital observation programs, and enable NOAA to address other issues germane to their mission that have traditionally been supported by Congress. It would allow enhancements in the development of an integrated ocean and atmospheric observing system; increased research and education activities, expand ocean conservation and management programs; and provide critical improvements in infrastructure (satellites, ships, high performance computers, facilities), and data management. Such an increase would represent significant progress toward addressing recommendations contained in the reports of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and the Pew Oceans Commission, the recent report card issued by the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative and the interagency Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy.

We fully appreciate the very tight fiscal constraints facing the nation and the difficult decisions associated with allocating limited financial resources. Given NOAA's role as the lead federal agency for our oceans and atmosphere, and our increasing appreciation and understanding of the human health, national security, and economic impacts associated with the oceanic and atmospheric physical and biological processes, we firmly believe that an increased investment in NOAA is needed now. We appreciate your consideration of our collective views and recommendations for NOAA as you and your colleagues continue the development of the fiscal year 2008 budget.

Sincerely,

University Corporation for Atmospheric Research
Consortium for Oceanographic Research & Education
Reinsurance Association of America
American Red Cross
Commercial Weather Services Association
Shipbuilders Council of America
The Weather Channel, Inc.
WeatherBank, Inc.
United Fishermen's Marketing Association, Inc.
Fugro Pelagos, Inc.
Raytheon Company
National Weather Service Employees Organization
The Weather Coalition
National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges
University of Oklahoma
National Association of Marine Laboratories
Sea Grant Association
Campaign for Environmental Literacy
Connecticut Sea Grant
American Society of Limnology and Oceanography
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
Marine Technology Society
Council of Environmental Deans and Directors
National Council for Science and the Environment
Joint Ocean Commission Initiative
Coastal States Organization
West Marine, Inc.
National Estuarine Research Reserve Association
The Ocean Foundation
North Carolina Sea Grant
Maine Sea Grant
Maryland Sea Grant
Skidaway Institute of Oceanography
Rhode Island Sea Grant
Annis Water Resources Institute, Grand Valley State University
Minnesota Sea Grant
Moss Landing Marine Laboratories
Scripps Institution of Oceanography
Association of Zoos and Aquariums
National Marine Manufacturers Association
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
New York Sea Grant
University of New Hampshire

Hatfield Marine Science Center
University of Texas Marine Science Institute
The Ohio State University
Ohio Sea Grant College Program
F.T. Stone Laboratory
Center for Lake Erie Area Research
Great Lakes Aquatic Ecosystem Research Consortium
North Carolina State University
University of Illinois Department of Atmospheric Sciences
University of North Carolina Wilmington
Purdue University
Vaisala Inc.
Michigan Sea Grant
New Hampshire Sea Grant
Institute for Exploration
Delaware Sea Grant
Columbia University
University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
National Fisheries Institute
Natural Resources Defense Council
Humboldt State University Marine Laboratory
Center of Marine Biotechnology, University of Maryland Biotechnology Institute
Shoals Marine Laboratory, Cornell University
Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Southern California
UCLA Institute of the Environment
Old Dominion University
Cooperative Institute for Limnology and Ecosystems Research
Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences
University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
American Rivers
Fish for the Future Foundation
Stony Brook University
Rutgers Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences
Great Lakes WATER Institute, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
Oceanic Institute
Texas A&M University - Galveston
Center for Coastal Studies, Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi
Harte Institute for Gulf of Mexico Studies
University of Miami - Rosenstiel School of Marine & Atmospheric Science
University of Rhode Island
Florida Sea Grant
Environmental Defense
Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
Florida State University Coastal and Marine Laboratory
Alliance for Earth Observations
Pennsylvania Sea Grant
The University of Texas Marine Science Institute
Management Association for Private Photogrammetric Surveyors
Oregon State University
Regional Science Consortium at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center
Oceana
South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium