

FRIENDS OF NOAA COALITION

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October 29, 2007

The Honorable Jim Nussle
Director
Office of Management and Budget
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20503

The Honorable James Connaughton
Chairman
Council on Environmental Quality
722 Jackson Place NW
Washington, D.C. 20503

The Honorable John Marburger
Director
Office of Science and Technology Policy
Executive Office of the President
725 17th Street Room 5228
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. Nussle, Mr. Connaughton, and Dr. Marburger:

As supporters, stakeholders, organized employees and partners of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), we are writing to strongly encourage you to recommend to the President that the Administration request from the Congress a budget of \$4.5 billion for fiscal year 2009.

NOAA is 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, national security, environmental protection, our quality of life and our competitiveness in the global marketplace. In fact, the America's Competes Act states that NOAA "shall be a full participant in any interagency effort to promote innovation and economic competitiveness through near-term and long-term basic scientific research and development and the promotion of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics education consistent with the agency mission, including authorized activities."

We are very supportive of efforts to transition various NOAA initiatives into competitive programs. For instance, the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) is moving from a set of distinct regional projects into a nation-wide competitive program that will coordinate, share, and transform ocean data into products and services to protect public health and help manage ocean and coastal resources. NOAA has also begun to competitively fund the Coastal and Estuarine Land Protection (CELP) program that protects important coastal and estuarine areas

that are threatened by conversion to other use. The Senate version of the FY08 appropriations bill reinforces this notion of competitive programs with their own proposals related to ocean, coastal and Great Lakes research; weather research; and expanded support for existing competitive programs related to climate change research, Sea Grant, environmental literacy grants, and other areas. This is an important step forward and we urge the Administration to support these efforts in the FY 2009 budget request. By funding more programs on a competitive basis, NOAA will strengthen ties to its stakeholders in the field, expand its intellectual capacity, and improve the depth and the breadth of the knowledge acquired and the applications implemented.

NOAA is also the lead federal agency supporting research and modeling the causes and impacts of global climate change. The atmosphere and the ocean are getting warmer, extreme weather events are becoming more frequent, regional impacts from climate change are becoming more pronounced, freshwater is being added to the ocean by melting ice sheets, and the oceans are becoming more acidic from absorbing elevated atmospheric concentrations of CO₂. Thus, the ability to understand, predict, mitigate, and adapt to the consequences of a changing environment is a monumental domestic and international challenge with enormous economic and societal implications. NOAA needs a robust research, exploration, observing, management, and education budget to more effectively fulfill its responsibilities in this area – which includes coordination among federal agencies, such as NASA and NSF, to understand and address the impacts of climate change and advance climate change education.

One of the major obstacles to understanding climate change is access to reliable, quality and consistent data streams. Earth observations from space are also essential for weather forecasting, hurricane warning, and management of agriculture, forestry and fisheries. The National Research Council reported earlier this year that the U.S. "extraordinary foundation of global observations is a great risk." We are therefore very concerned with enhancing the ability of NOAA to work with NASA, the U.S. Navy, and other agencies to improve access to and analysis of earth observations from space in the very near-term and long-term. This would include the interagency support to the OSTP-led studies on options for optimizing the nation's satellite capacity to measure and monitor climate.

At the same time as we are dealing with climate change issues, we are also facing the challenge of severe weather events which have dramatic and substantial impacts on economic productivity at the national, state and local level. As such, there is a pressing need for expanded support for research on improved understanding and predicting of a wide range of deadly and costly weather events, such as hurricane intensification, tornado formation, winter storm development, droughts and heat waves, to name but a few. This will require added resources for NOAA's research laboratories and the National Weather Services' environmental prediction centers, and the concomitant upgrading of many ground- and upper-atmosphere-based observing systems (such as Unmanned Aerial Systems). In addition, enhanced efforts are needed to better and more rapidly transition weather research developments into operations - into the hands of the operational forecasters who issue timely local forecasts, watches and warnings that consistently save lives and minimize property damage.

Earlier this year CEQ and OSTP released the Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy to provide a framework for research investments in ocean science for

the coming decade. The President's FY2008 budget request included \$140 million to support clean ocean priorities including enhanced ocean science and we greatly appreciate this initial step toward addressing outstanding funding needs in the ocean community. We believe that dedicating additional resources toward these priorities in FY 2009 is a wise down-payment on fulfilling the recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and would clearly demonstrate the President's growing commitment to improving the economic and ecological health our nation's Oceans, Coasts, and Great Lakes.

We are mindful that you face difficult choices as you prepare the FY2009 budget. But we must recognize the unique role that NOAA plays in increasing our understanding, management and protection of our global ecosystem. We respectfully recommend that the Administration seek a budget for NOAA of \$4.5 billion for fiscal year 2009.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education
University Corporation for Atmospheric Research
Reinsurance Association of America
National Weather Service Employees Organization
Campaign for Environmental Literacy
American Red Cross
The Nature Conservancy
National Marine Manufacturers Association
Shipbuilders' Council of America
U.S. Chamber of Commerce Space Enterprise Council
Sea Grant Association
National Association of Marine Laboratories
The Weather Coalition
The Ocean Foundation
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
Skidaway Institute of Oceanography
The Weather Channel, Inc.
AccuWeather
Joint Ocean Commission Initiative
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
Commercial Weather Services Association
WeatherBank, Inc.
Institute for Exploration
National Federation of Regional Associations for Coastal and Ocean Observing
American Rivers
National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges
Raytheon
Battelle
University of Oklahoma
Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium
Virginia Sea Grant College Program

Minnesota Sea Grant College Program
North Carolina Sea Grant Program
Louisiana Sea Grant College Program
School of Earth, Society, and Environment, University of Illinois
Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences, Rutgers University
Vaisala, Inc
Michigan Sea Grant College Program
Cooperative Institute for Limnology and Ecosystem Research, University of Michigan
Texas Sea Grant College Program
Hawaii Sea Grant College Program
Maryland Sea Grant College Program
Planetary Data, Incorporated
Weather Risk Management Association
National Undersea Research Center, University of Connecticut
Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium
Florida Sea Grant College Program
New York State Sea Grant Program
Cornell University
State University of New York at Albany
University of Missouri – Columbia
American Society of Limnology and Oceanography
Marine Conservation Biology Institute
Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Southern California
Scripps Institution of Oceanography
United Fishermen's Marketing Association, Inc
Association of Zoos and Aquariums
The State University of New York
Fugro Pelagos, Inc
University of Washington
National Estuarine Research Reserve Association
University of Southern Mississippi
UCLA Institute of the Environment
The Ohio State University
Ohio Sea Grant College Program
F. T. Stone Laboratory
Alliance for Earth Observations