

March 06, 2012

The Honorable John D. Rockefeller
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Rockefeller and Ranking Hutchison:

We write on behalf of millions of Americans who are deeply concerned about the continued underfunding of NOAA's ocean, coastal, and fisheries programs. We urge Congress to fund the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) at or above \$5.3 billion for FY 2013 in order to provide adequate funding to support the full range of NOAA's core missions. This level of funding would support the President's request for satellite procurements, while restoring funding for the ocean, coastal, and fisheries programs to 2010 levels.

NOAA's mission in protecting, restoring and managing our oceans and coasts is vitally important not only to sustain these resources but also to sustain our coastal and national economies. In 2009, according to the National Ocean Economics Program, coastal tourism and recreation alone contributed more than \$61 billion to the Gross Domestic Product, and accounted for over 1.8 million jobs. A 2011 National Marine Fisheries report exploring fisheries economics found that the commercial fishing industry generated over \$116 billion in sales and \$31.5 billion in income, and supported more than 1 million jobs in 2009; expenditures by recreational fishermen generated nearly \$50 billion in sales and supported more than 320,000 jobs. Covering two-thirds of Earth's surface, the ocean is home to 97 percent of all life. Even the air we breathe is connected to a healthy ocean – more than half of the oxygen in the atmosphere is generated by ocean-dwelling organisms.

We simply cannot afford to underfund NOAA's ocean and coastal programs. With over half of Americans living on our coasts, our economy depends on a healthy ocean and healthy coastlines. Whether it is preparing for and responding to natural disasters, restoring marine habitat, sustaining healthy fisheries, understanding ocean currents, or conducting important research on ocean ecosystems, NOAA's role is vital to the strength of our economy.

While we recognize these are tough fiscal times in America, and Congress is trimming government budgets across the board, NOAA's ocean programs have been particularly hard hit with a nearly 14% reduction since 2010. With satellite procurement costs continuing to grow, we urge the House to maintain a balanced portfolio on investments

across NOAA's missions. Americans shouldn't have to choose between weather satellites that save lives and livelihoods and protecting the ocean and coastal resources that underpin the economies and way of life for over half the population. We simply need both.

We again urge Congress to fund NOAA at or above \$5.3 billion in order to restore overall funding for ocean, coastal, and fisheries programs to FY 2010 levels. Providing the resources needed to make smart choices for a healthy ocean won't just benefit those who live and work along the coast every day, but the American economy and environment as a whole.

Sincerely,

Organizations & Businesses

- Alaska Wilderness League
- Alliance for the Great Lakes
- American Association of Port Authorities
- American Geophysical Union
- American Littoral Society
- American Salvage Association
- Association to Preserve Cape Cod
- Bimini Biological Field Station Foundation
- Blue Ocean Society
- Bonefish & Tarpon Trust
- Bristol Bay Native Association Marine Mammal Program
- CARIS
- Center for Chesapeake Communities
- Center for Coastal Studies
- The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education (COARE)
- Center for Biological Diversity
- Center for Water Advocacy
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Christine Baltzer Parks Environmental Foundation
- Citizens Campaign for the Environment – NY & CT
- Clean Ocean Action
- Conservation Council for Hawai'i
- Conservation Law Foundation
- Consortium for Ocean Leadership
- Copper River Watershed Project
- East Coast Shellfish Growers Association
- Endangered Habitats League
- Environmental Defense Center
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Farallones Marine Sanctuary Association
- Florida Wildlife Federation
- Greenpeace
- Gulf of Maine Research Institute
- Gulf of Mexico Foundation, Inc.
- Gulf Restoration Network
- Island Institute
- John G. Shedd Aquarium
- Jones River Watershed Association
- Lake Erie Region Conservancy
- Maine Island Trail Association
- Maine Rivers
- Marine Conservation Institute
- Marine Fish Conservation Network
- Mass Association of Conservation Commissions
- Monterey Bay Aquarium

- National Association of Marine Laboratories
- National Audubon Society
- National Coalition for Marine Conservation
- National Estuarine Research Reserve Association
- National Federation of Regional Associations for Coastal and Ocean Observing
- National Marine Sanctuaries Foundation
- National Parks Conservation Association
- National Wildlife Federation
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- New York / New Jersey Baykeeper
- Nina Kaars
- Ocean Conservancy
- Ocean Conservation Research
- Ocean Defenders Alliance
- The Ocean Project
- Oceana
- Ohio Environmental Council
- Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition
- Oregon Wave Energy Trust
- Port Orford Ocean Resource Team
- Programa Sea Grant Universidad de Puerto Rico
- Project AWARE Foundation
- Quest Ecology Inc.
- The Rare & Endangered Reef Relief
- Restore America's Estuaries
- Rhode Island Sea Grant
- The Sands of White Horse Beach Association
- SandyHook SeaLife Foundation
- Save the Bay, Narragansett Bay
- Save the Bay, San Francisco
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- St. Johns River Alliance
- Stellwagen Alive
- Surfers' Environmental Alliance
- Surfrider Foundation
- Sustainable Loudoun
- TerraScapes Environmental
- Trout Unlimited
- Trust for Public Land
- World Wildlife Fund

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