

April 9, 2014

Senator Barbara Mikulski  
Chair, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice Science, and Related Agencies  
United States Senate Committee on Appropriations  
142 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice Science, and Related Agencies  
United States Senate Committee on Appropriations  
125 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Re: Support funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration at or above the President's FY15 Request of \$5.5 billion.**

Dear Chairwoman Mikulski and Ranking Member Shelby:

We write on behalf of millions of Americans who are strongly supportive of robust funding and smart investment in NOAA's ocean, coastal, and fisheries programs. We strongly support funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration at or above the President's Request of \$5.5 billion in FY15. In addition, we support balanced investments across NOAA's dual atmospheric and oceanic missions – Americans shouldn't have to choose between weather satellites and ocean and coastal resources that support and protect our coastal economies and communities. We simply need both.

NOAA's mission to protect, restore and manage our ocean, coasts and Great Lakes is vitally important not only to sustain these resources but also to sustain our coastal economies. The *National Ocean Economics Program* has estimated that the U.S. ocean and coastal economy contributes more than \$282 billion annually to the nation's GDP through fisheries and seafood production, tourism, recreation, transportation, and construction. Additionally, over 2.8 million jobs in the U.S. depend on the ocean and coasts. Adequate funding for NOAA is critically important to support a healthy and resilient ocean that can continue to strengthen our coastal economies and communities.

Resilience has emerged as the critical goal that unites all of NOAA's ocean and coastal programs. Man-made and natural ocean and coastal disasters over the last several years, from Department of Commerce declared fisheries disasters to the BP *Deepwater Horizon* oil disaster, remind us of the connection between the health of our ocean and coasts and the well-being of our coastal communities and economy. Resilience means more than just storm-ready; truly resilient communities are prepared to face changing ocean conditions, from acidification to sea level rise, changing economic conditions, from recession to emerging ocean uses, as well as major catastrophes, from Superstorm Sandy to marine debris clogging waterways. Investing in NOAA's programs will ensure we can respond to and mitigate the impacts and costs of future disasters by creating healthy and more resilient coastal ecosystems and communities.

For example:

- Coastal wetland buffer zones in the U.S. are estimated to provide \$23.2 billion per year in storm protection and a single acre of wetland can store 1 to 1.5 million gallons of flood water or storm surge.
- Healthy fisheries are needed to support an industry of more than 60,000 jobs and \$6.6 billion in GDP. Information provided by core data collection, catch monitoring and stock assessment programs within the NMFS is critical to ending overfishing.
- Ocean and coastal observations and monitoring supports severe storm tracking and weather forecasting systems, which greatly reduce the cost of natural disaster preparation, evacuation, and mitigation.

The President's Request seeks modest increases in ocean, coastal, and fishery programs, and we support these increases as an important step towards robust funding for NOAA's ocean mission. In FY14, NOAA has finally been put back on a path towards robust and sustainable funding, the first step in bouncing back from significant cuts to critical programs from FY11 to FY13.

**Underfunding NOAA simply is not sustainable, we urge Congress to recognize the importance of our ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes by fully funding NOAA programs at or above \$5.5 billion in FY15.**

Signed,

#### Organizations & Businesses

- Advanced Aqua Dynamics, Inc.
- Alliance for the Great Lakes
- American Geophysical Union
- American Rivers
- Center for Biological Diversity
- Center for Coastal Studies
- Chesapeake Communities
- Citizens Campaign for the Environment
- Coastal Conservation League
- Coastal Research & Education Society of Long Island
- Coastal States Organization
- Conservation Law Foundation
- Consortium for Ocean Leadership
- Earthjustice
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Green / Duwamish & Central Puget Sound Watershed (Watershed

#### Resource Inventory Area 9)

##### Ecosystem Forum

- Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology
- International Federation of Fly Fishers
- IOOS Association
- Long Live the Kings
- Management Association for Private Photogrammetric Surveyors (MAPPS)
- Marine Conservation Institute
- National Audubon Society
- National Estuarine Research Reserve Association
- National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
- National Society of Professional Surveyors (NSPS)
- Natural Resources Defense Council
- Nature Abounds
- The Nature Conservancy
- Ocean Conservancy

- Ocean Conservation Research
- The Ocean Project
- Oceana
- Operation Splash
- Project AWARE
- Puget Sound Partnership
- Puget Sound Salmon Recovery Council
- Reef Relief
- Restore America's Estuaries
- Rhode Island Marine Trades Association
- Save Our Shores
- Save Our Wild Salmon Coalition
- Scripps Institution of Oceanography
- Sierra Club
- Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA)
- Surfrider Foundation

#### Individuals

- Carleton Ray  
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- Dr. Alina M. Szmant  
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University of North Carolina  
Wilmington
- Dr. Rozalind Jester  
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Fort Myers, FL
- Elizabeth Rhodes  
Professor of Hispanic Studies  
Boston College
- Harald Duell  
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- Jennifer I. Barrett  
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Founder, Hawaii Nature Hui  
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- Jerry McCormick-Ray  
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- John C. Ogden  
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- Leesa Cobb  
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- Mitchell A. Roffer (Ph.D.)  
President  
Roffer's Ocean Fishing Forecasting  
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West Melbourne, FL
- Sarah Towne  
NOAA Fisheries West Coast Region  
and  
University of Washington Masters  
Candidate (School of Marine and  
Environmental Affairs)
- Will McClintock, Ph.D.  
SeaSketch Director  
Marine Science Institute  
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- Y. Peter Sheng, Ph.D.  
Professor and Director  
Coastal and Oceanographic  
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University of Florida