

22 December 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
230 U.S. Capitol Building (Senate)
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
419 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Paul Ryan
232 U.S. Capitol Building (House)
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
204 U.S. Capitol Building (House)
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leaders McConnell, Schumer, and Pelosi:

On behalf of the Friends of NOAA (FoNOAA) Coalition, we would like to thank you for your efforts in crafting the fiscal year (FY) 2018 appropriations bills. We understand that in a time of budget restraints, Congress must make difficult financial decisions.

However, as you complete the federal appropriations process, we urge you to recognize the critical work conducted by NOAA by robustly funding the agency in the final FY 2018 spending bills. NOAA is a bureau of the U.S. Department of Commerce, funded in the Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations account, and it serves an essential role in protecting our nation's security, economy, environment, and quality of life. A few examples of NOAA's benefit to the country are outlined below.

The 2017 Atlantic hurricane season could have been far more perilous if not for the vital oceanic and atmospheric forecasting and monitoring provided by NOAA to emergency managers and communities in need. Despite a record three Category 4 hurricanes making landfall in the U.S., the National Hurricane Center and Weather Forecast Offices throughout the affected regions issued forecasts with record-setting accuracy. This would not have been possible without the heroic work of the crews of NOAA's aging hurricane research and reconnaissance aircraft.

On December 18, 2017, the GOES-16 satellite achieved operational status, replacing GOES-13 in the GOES-East position. New products derived from GOES-16 satellite data will improve NOAA's decision support, particularly with high-impact weather events, such as floods, hurricanes, and tornadoes. The second in the series of next-generation weather satellites, GOES-S, will launch in 2018 to become GOES-West, expanding these new satellite data products and advances to the western United States.

Almost exactly a year after the launch of the groundbreaking GOES-16 satellite, this November, NOAA continued to exhibit world-class innovation with the launch of the Joint Polar Satellite System-1 (JPSS-1), now known as NOAA-20. Data collected by NOAA-20 will contribute to NOAA's suite of life-saving products. Whether tracking wildfires, volcanic eruptions, or severe storms, the information from NOAA satellites plays an irreplaceable role in keeping our nation safe.

NOAA observation and monitoring systems track vital atmospheric and oceanic data, such as tides and currents, habitat, coastal erosion, harmful algal blooms, and sea ice. This important data allows NOAA and its partners to make critical forecasts. For example, NOAA's predictions of harmful algal blooms on western end of Lake Erie in the summer of 2017 helped communities and policy makers to make informed decisions to protect public health and safety.

From rebuilding albacore tuna in the North Atlantic, to issuing reports on the state of American fisheries, NOAA underpins the strong ocean economy that millions of Americans rely on every day. This critical industry contributes more than \$352 billion to the U.S. GDP and supports 3.1 million jobs. NOAA scientists study how Americans consume and purchase domestic and international seafood, and provide data that informs the aquaculture industry and helps create thousands of new jobs.

NOAA provides unmatched services, products, and value to the American people. As an agency that does science in the name of service and stewardship, NOAA is uniquely aimed at putting people first. Friends of NOAA urges you to robustly fund this valuable mission in the final FY18 appropriations bills.

Thank you for your support and consideration. The Friends of NOAA coalition look forward to working with you in the future on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Friends of NOAA Co-Chairs

Carissa Bunge
*Senior Public Affairs
Specialist*
American Geophysical
Union

Ari Gerstman
*Director of Washington
Operations*
University Corporation for
Atmospheric Research

Allison Hays
*Senior Specialist,
Communications and Policy*
Consortium for Ocean
Leadership

CC: The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
The Honorable Nita Lowey
The Honorable Thad Cochran
The Honorable Patrick Leahy