



September 14, 2010

Mr. Jeffrey Zients
Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Acting Director Zients:

As supporters, stakeholders, employees, and partners of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Friends of NOAA requests that the Administration recognize in the Fiscal Year 2012 budget that NOAA requires \$8 billion to carry out its mission.

The Deepwater Horizon oil spill has highlighted NOAA as one of the premier science agencies in the Federal Government, and every day brings new reminders of the value that NOAA provides to our nation's citizens. In the Gulf of Mexico, the agency plays an invaluable role in delivering a fully integrated range of oceanic and atmospheric data, products, and services, from critically important environmental observations and predictions to comprehensive response, restoration, education, and long-term management options. Storm warnings, hurricane and drought forecasts, climate studies, ocean observations and marine and coastal resource assessments are examples of the environmental information that NOAA provides to minimize loss of life and property damage, enable sound ocean resource management, and support the economic competitiveness of industries that together account for an overwhelming majority of US GDP. However, the Deepwater Horizon spill has thrown NOAA's limitations into sharp relief, revealing gaps in the agency's capacity to provide decision makers with information essential to the nation's economy, security, environment, and quality of life. We urge the Administration to fully recognize NOAA's value to the nation by addressing these limitations and enhancing the agency's capabilities in the coming fiscal year.

While we were pleased to see the Fiscal Year 2011 President's Request for NOAA rise to \$5.6 billion, demands on the agency continue to outstrip this level of funding. After an era of chronic underfunding, continued shortfalls at NOAA will result in weakened core programs, major infrastructure deficits, and diminished capabilities to address hazards and disasters, like the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, that affect America's economy, national security, and environment. In addition, the Administration's establishment of a national ocean policy and intent to form a climate service within NOAA suggest new mandates that will require resources above and beyond the agency's current funding level. This situation significantly jeopardizes NOAA's ability to satisfy growing demands for its data, products and services, including information that contributes to comprehensive ocean and coastal management, the provision of climate services, and enhanced capacities to understand and predict Earth's continually-evolving environment. NOAA must be supported at an \$8 billion funding level to continue the scientific observation, research, education, and management programs that are fundamental to sound policy decisions and the distribution of timely and accurate climate, weather, and ocean information.

Internal needs assessments and a series of National Research Council reports offer compelling evidence that NOAA requires additional resources, and Congressional authorizing and appropriating committees have agreed that the agency has been underfunded for far too long. Though we sincerely welcome and appreciate the funding increases that support essential operational capabilities provided by NOAA's satellite programs, many other crucial NOAA programs also need additional funds. In light of these urgent needs, we respectfully request that the Administration demonstrate its

commitment to NOAA's mission by increasing the agency's funding level to \$8 billion in the Fiscal Year 2012 Federal Budget.

A National Ocean Policy and Coastal and Marine Spatial Planning

In July 2010, President Obama established a National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Coasts, and Great Lakes, also providing for a National Ocean Council and framework for coastal and marine spatial planning (CMSP). This critical step responds to numerous expert reports in addressing the fragmented and inefficient ocean and coastal management that limits the productivity of our coastal economy, where 30 coastal states contribute 83% of GDP, and directly affects the 52% of Americans living in coastal counties. The CMSP process facilitates sustainable uses of our ocean and coasts by establishing public processes to address cumulative and potentially conflicting uses of the sea, while simultaneously protecting, maintaining, and restoring marine ecosystem health. Adequate financial resources are necessary for the coordinated ocean observation infrastructure needed to collect data that enable effective regional CMSP processes, and funding must also be provided to address the needs and mechanisms of a new National Ocean Council as it directs the implementation of national ocean policy objectives. It is clear that NOAA will play a key role in accomplishing all aspects of the national ocean policy and CMSP framework, though budgets for this purpose have thus far been inadequate. We encourage the Administration to provide NOAA with increased funding in the initial years of ocean policy implementation – this could significantly reduce overall costs by enabling early opportunities to improve coordination, identify efficiencies, and demonstrate valuable returns on investment in NOAA science and services.

NOAA Climate Service

Consistently a world-leader in climate observation and research, NOAA offers decision makers data, products and services concerning climate variability, climate change and projected impacts on coastlines, water resources, weather extremes, marine ecosystems, and policy options. In February 2010, the Department of Commerce announced its intent to create a NOAA Climate Service, providing a clearinghouse for the cutting-edge climate information currently in high demand by all sectors of the economy and all levels of government. The integration of NOAA climate services is a welcome response to the 2009 National Research Council report *Restructuring Federal Climate Research to Meet the Challenges of Climate Change*, and we expect that the National Academy of Public Administration will support NOAA's Climate Service plans in its soon-to-be-released study of organizational design options. With over \$4 trillion of US GDP concentrated in climate-sensitive industries, NOAA must be prepared to gain a better understanding of both climate science and stakeholders' data and service needs in order for the agency's Climate Service to reach its full potential. The President's 2011 budget request for NOAA climate services fell far short of providing the resources necessary for the agency to develop a full suite of timely, accurate, and authoritative climate information, and we urge the Administration to increase funding for this key area as NOAA works to build the scientific and institutional infrastructure necessary to provide reliable climate services.

Environmental Observations

From the depths of the ocean to the farthest reaches of our atmosphere and beyond, NOAA's environmental observations are fundamental to its provision of operational weather, climate and ocean information and essential for realization of NOAA's Climate Service and the national ocean policy. The National Research Council has concluded in multiple reports that the nation needs more detailed and better integrated oceanic and atmospheric observing capabilities, and the knowledge gaps exposed by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill confirm that NOAA's environmental exploration

and observation abilities must be improved. The agency's physical, chemical and biological ocean observations are instrumental in tracking spilled oil, identifying the living and non-living marine resources exposed to potential impact, and restoring the Gulf ecosystems that support 23 million recreational fishing trips per year and a \$600 million commercial fishery. Both in and beyond the Gulf of Mexico, NOAA's atmospheric and space observations enable storm warnings and forecasts that protect human lives and costly infrastructure from the effects of extreme and severe weather, including drought, fire, flooding, solar storms, lightning, tornadoes and hurricanes. It is clear that NOAA must incorporate its local and regional observations into robust, multi-purpose national networks in order to provide decision makers with environmental data, products and services that are vital to the nation's security, economy, and environment. The development of a "network of networks" to integrate the agency's environmental observations would enhance the utility of both oceanic and atmospheric observing systems, and we encourage the Administration to provide additional funding for NOAA's environmental observation enterprise.

If NOAA is to fulfill its mandates for ocean and coastal management, invigorate the nation's science and technology enterprise, and keep America competitive in the blue and green economies of this century, a range of critical capabilities and initiatives must be supported and their budgets increased. Friends of NOAA therefore requests that NOAA's budget be increased to \$8 billion in the coming year. Ultimately, this level of funding will ensure that NOAA is able to meet current mandates, address new initiatives, and effectively protect our national interests.

Thank you for your consideration of our collective support for NOAA's scientific enterprise and management responsibilities. If you have any questions, please contact Jeb Berman at jeb@nmsfocean.org or (202) 870-0387.

Sincerely,



Alliance for Earth Observations • American Association of Port Authorities • American Rivers
American Society of Limnology and Oceanography • Battelle • Blue Climate Solutions
The Campbell Marketing Group, Inc. • Campaign for Environmental Literacy
The Consortium for Ocean Leadership • Guanaja Mangrove Restoration
Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute • Institute for Exploration and Ocean Exploration Trust
Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, Columbia University Earth Institute
Marine Conservation Biology Institute • Marine Fish Conservation Network
The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation • National Weather Service Employees Organization
Navocean, Inc. • Ocean Conservation Research • The Ocean Foundation • The Ocean Project
Oregon State University • Raytheon • Restore America's Estuaries
Scripps Institution of Oceanography • Sea Stewards • SeaWeb
Shipbuilders Council of America • University Corporation for Atmospheric Research
The University of Oklahoma • Vaisala, Inc. • The Weather Coalition • West Marine
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution