

March 20, 2017

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Jose Serrano
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

RE: Oppose funding cuts at NOAA

Dear Senators and Representatives,

According to recent reports, the Trump administration plans to propose budget cuts of nearly \$1 billion for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in Fiscal Year 2018 (FY2018). *The Washington Post* has reported that the 17 percent cut would target climate science, external research, coastal management, estuary reserves, and coastal resilience – including a crippling 26 percent cut to the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research. The release of the “America First” OMB budget confirms that the Trump administration is proposing to cut the Department of Commerce by \$1.5 billion and to eliminate NOAA grants and programs “supporting coastal and marine management, research, and education, including Sea Grant.”

The undersigned include groups and individuals that support NOAA’s ocean, coastal, and fisheries programs. **We write to express our extreme dismay at OMB’s proposed budget and the leaked FY2018 NOAA budget details and to ask that you ensure that no such budget becomes a reality for our nation’s premier ocean agency. We urge you to maintain funding for NOAA at or above current levels.**

At the same time that we are hearing deeply concerning reports about NOAA’s FY2018 budget proposal, the agency’s FY2017 budget expires in less than two months. **We also urge you to ensure that the final FY2017 budget for NOAA maintains at least current funding levels, and makes additional investments in our oceans and coastal communities where possible.**

NOAA’s mission to understand, protect, restore, and manage our ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes is vitally important to sustain these resources and our economy. The U.S. ocean and coastal economy contributes \$359 billion annually to the nation’s GDP and supports 3 million jobs. There is a good reason that NOAA is in the Department of Commerce, and adequate funding is vital to support a healthy and resilient ocean that can maintain and grow our coastal economies and communities. For example, our nation’s fisheries and seafood sector is a \$214 billion dollar industry and fishermen rely on information from NOAA to make the most informed decisions on where to fish, how to fish and when to fish. Coastal

wetland buffer zones in the U.S. are estimated to provide \$23.2 billion per year in storm protection, and NOAA works to build resilient coasts that are more storm-ready and prepared for threats like sea level rise and ocean acidification.

Much of the U.S. ocean is under federal jurisdiction, and yet many of NOAA's programs focus on pushing resources and decision-making power out to regions, states and communities. From region-by-region fishery management, to region-specific programs in places like the Arctic, to extramural funding that supports state agencies and universities, to place-based conservation in our estuaries and oceans, NOAA is providing leverage for hardworking people on the coast and on the water who are fighting for a stronger economy and a healthier ocean.

We ask that you also consider the balance between NOAA's oceanic and atmospheric missions, and the nexus between the two. Americans should not have to choose between weather satellites and ocean and coastal resources like coral reefs and marine mammals. We need both. NOAA's ocean programs support many other federal agencies and missions that will also suffer if NOAA funding is cut. For example, ocean observations and monitoring provide critical information for severe storm tracking and weather forecasting. And ocean programs facilitate homeland security and national defense functions, including U.S. Navy operations and U.S. Coast Guard search and rescue.

We urge Congress to fund NOAA at current levels or higher in FY2017 and FY2018 and to prioritize investments in ocean, coastal, and fisheries programs.

Signed,

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