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This May, the White House nominated Rick Spinrad to serve as Chief Scientist for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). His nomination is part of an ongoing effort to re-establish NOAA leadership following a number of high-level vacancies in the past year. As Chief Scientist, he will "drive policy and program direction for science and technology priorities," according to the memo.

Spinrad spent much of his career in the Navy before serving as Assistant Administrator for Oceanic Services and Coastal Zone Management at NOAA, and more recently as Assistant Administrator for Research at NOAA. He is currently the Vice President for Research at Oregon State University.

NOAA's Chief Scientist position has been vacant since 2011 when Senate Republicans blocked Scott Doney's nomination over demands for testimony regarding the Department of the Interior's decision to halt drilling in the Gulf of Mexico after the Deepwater Horizon spill.

Sources: E&E News, White House Office of the Press Secretary
