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The National Research Council (NRC) issued a report on January 23 detailing eight priorities for the next decade for ocean research and laying out the difficult financial decisions the marine science community faces. Marine researchers face increasing costs of infrastructure—such as research vessels, drilling platforms, and observatories—that outpace static federal funding for marine science. The NRC report recommends that, given these circumstances, the Division of Ocean Sciences within the National Science Foundation limit infrastructure costs to 50 percent of its annual budget. To make these cuts, NRC suggested decreasing scientific ocean drilling, building fewer new research vessels, and reducing spending on the Ocean Observatories Initiative. The eight priorities laid out by the report for ocean science research in the next ten years include a focus on sea level change; geohazards such as undersea volcanism, mega-earthquakes, tsunamis, and undersea landslides; change in marine food webs; the role of marine biodiversity in ecosystem resilience; and climate change impact on marine ecosystems, among others.

Sources: E & E News, National Academies, Science Insider

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