

## Senate passes bipartisan ocean monitoring and research act

January 8, 2018

On January 8, the Senate unanimously passed Senator Roger Wicker's (R-MS) Coordinated Ocean Monitoring and Research Act (S.1425). The bipartisan bill revises and reauthorizes the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System (ICOOS) Act of 2009 (33 USC 3601), which established the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) to consolidate and coordinate the efforts of hundreds of federal, state, and local observing programs through fiscal year (FY) 2021.

With the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) leading its implementation and administration, IOOS is a network of 17 federal and 11 regional entities that provide information about the nation's coasts, oceans, and Great Lakes, as well as new tools and forecasts to improve safety, enhance the economy, and protect the environment. IOOS collects data for defense, search and rescue, commerce, navigation, energy development, and other activities. Since establishment of the program, funding for IOOS has increased from \$28.6 million in FY 2011 to \$37.4 million in FY 2017. While the President's FY 2018 Budget Request included \$36.2 million for the program, the House and Senate Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Bills for FY 2018 proposed increasing the program's funding to \$37.5 million (House) and \$40.2 million (Senate). The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that implementing S.1425 would cost \$71 million over the 2018-2022 period.

In addition to reauthorizing the ICOOS Act, S.1425 promotes best practices regarding data sharing for public use, investment in autonomous unmanned underwater and surface ocean research vehicles, closing gaps in high frequency radar, and assisting Coast Guard search and rescue operations. The legislation includes provisions for the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology, the National Science and Technology Council, and National Science Foundation to advance studies of ocean acidification and hypoxia.

*Sources: Library of Congress; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; U.S. House of Representatives; U.S. Senate; White House*

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