

October 11, 2013

The Honorable Sylvia Mathews Burwell
Director, Office of Management and Budget
725 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Director Burwell:

As supporters, stakeholders, employees, and partners of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), **Friends of NOAA strongly supports funding the agency at no less than \$5.5 billion in FY15.**

NOAA is essential to America's economy, security, environment, and quality of life, and only a balanced approach to funding the agency will allow NOAA to realize the greatest economic and job creation benefits for the American people. With over half of Americans living along our coasts, insured coastal property worth some \$9 trillion, and weather- and climate- sensitive industries accounting for an overwhelming majority of US GDP, Americans need NOAA's fully integrated range of oceanic and atmospheric data, products, and services now more than ever before. Investing in NOAA strengthens our nation's capacity for science-based innovation, providing superior economic value by enabling businesses and government to better manage risk and optimize decision-making.

If NOAA is to satisfy growing demands for its information and services, the Administration must maintain adequate support to sustain states and coastal communities dependent on NOAA's effective ocean, coastal, and fisheries programs while also providing sufficient funding for weather forecasts, warnings and satellites that ensure the nation is prepared for future hazards and disasters. NOAA is also critical to preparing the next generation of US business leaders, scientists and citizens to thrive in a changing world. The agency's science, service, and stewardship missions are interdependent and connected in many ways, and it is critical that adequate funding be provided for NOAA to both collect and distribute data, and to validate and translate that data into products and services that Americans value.

NOAA's capabilities to understand, predict, and manage risk are absolutely essential to the safe conduct of daily life and the basic functioning of a modern economy. While we strongly support continued investments in satellite programs that protect American lives and livelihoods, Friends of NOAA strongly urges the Administration to develop a stable, long-term vision for funding both satellite procurement and day-to-day operations across the entire agency. Only a balanced approach to funding will enable NOAA to continue delivering products that minimize loss of life and property damage, give businesses the information they need to create and maintain jobs, enable sound ocean resource management, and enhance capacities to understand and predict Earth's continually-evolving environment. A strong and balanced budget for NOAA also serves key priorities of the Administration relating to creating jobs, addressing climate change, and improving ocean governance.

Investments in the following six areas are critical for NOAA to provide maximum benefits to the American people.

- National Weather Service Forecasts and Warnings: On the nation's highways and roads, adverse weather causes 7,400 deaths, over 700,000 injuries, 1.5 million crashes, and \$42 billion in economic losses each year. Roughly 75% of avoidable air traffic delays could be eliminated with more accurate weather information, saving \$19 billion per year. At least 1/3 of US GDP is weather and climate sensitive.
Funding cuts could result in the closure of NWS forecast offices, each of which safeguards an average population of 2.5 million people, and jeopardize the provision of 76 billion observations, 1.5 million forecasts, and 50,000 warnings each year.
- Environmental Data to Manage Risk: Long-term environmental information affecting agriculture, marine and freshwater resources, flooding, forest management, coastal development, and wildland fire gives stakeholders critical tools to manage natural resources, reduce hazard risks, and limit federal liabilities. Drought forecasts are worth up to \$8 billion per year to the farming, transportation, tourism, and energy sectors, and a changing ocean affects coastal properties worth \$170 billion.
Funding cuts would jeopardize critical, high quality jobs and research capabilities and place at risk the development of new technologies and industries enabled by university and industry partnerships for long-term monitoring of environmental change.
- Healthy Ocean and Coasts: Over 2.7 million jobs in coastal construction, fisheries, transportation, recreation, and other ocean-dependent industries rely on healthy ecosystems and contribute more than \$258 billion annually to the nation's GDP. A healthy ocean has drawn nearly half of all Americans to live on the coasts – 51 million workers in coastal counties contribute nearly \$6.6 trillion annually to GDP.
Funding cuts would risk NOAA's ability to ensure clean beaches, fishing, and sustainable economies in thousands of coastal communities; provide oceanographic data enabling safe maritime commerce; and implement the recommendations of the bipartisan US Commission on Ocean Policy.
- Fisheries Management: Fishery stock assessments and data collection are essential to give managers the information they need to sustain fishing opportunities and jobs while preventing overfishing. Rebuilding all overfished stocks and harvesting them at maximum sustainable yield would generate \$31 billion in sales impacts and support up to 500,000 jobs.
Funding cuts would undermine recent gains in stock assessments and set back efforts to identify science-based catch limits that will maintain productive fisheries, secure fishing opportunities and jobs for present and future generations, and support the economic viability of coastal communities.
- Geostationary and Polar Satellite Systems: Government at all levels, citizens, industry, and the military rely on NOAA satellites producing continuous data for weather forecasting, storm tracking, and long-term monitoring that protect lives and infrastructure. Polar and geostationary satellite observations can save up to \$1.6 billion per year through better storm warnings, resulting in savings for the maritime commerce, energy, aviation, boating, and agriculture sectors.
Funding cuts will increase the total cost to taxpayers and force the continued erosion of funding for other core NOAA programs. Reductions may also delay launch dates, leaving Americans without the detailed severe weather information and warnings on which they rely every day.
- Research and Innovation: Cutting-edge science enables the development of innovative technologies, models, and observing systems that improve NOAA's long-term effectiveness and provide information critical to the basic functioning of a modern economy and safe society. Research establishes a credible foundation for businesses and government to understand, predict, and manage the risks of routine and severe weather, changing ocean ecosystems, and other environmental

challenges.

Funding cuts would jeopardize improvements in ecosystem and environmental forecasting and modeling capabilities; integrated observing systems and the provision of basic environmental data; and the development of tools that help communities plan for extreme weather and other disasters.

We again urge the Administration to fund programs essential to protecting lives and livelihoods without suppressing effective ocean, coastal, and fisheries programs. Furthermore, we strongly encourage you to recognize the unique economic and job creation benefits of NOAA and its partners by funding the agency at or above \$5.5 billion in FY15. If the Friends of NOAA coalition can be of service or provide additional information, please contact Rebecca Jablonski-Diehl at Rebecca@NMSFocean.org or (301) 608-3040.

Sincerely,

**Friends
of NOAA**

AccuWeather, Inc. • Alliance for Earth Observations • American Association of Port Authorities
American Geophysical Union • American Geosciences Institute • American Rivers
American Weather and Climate Industry Association
Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography • Association of National Estuary Programs
Association of Public and Land-grant Universities • Association of Zoos & Aquariums
Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp. • Battelle
Campaign for Environmental Literacy • The Campbell Marketing Group, Inc.
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Marine Conservation Institute • Marine Fish Conservation Network • The Maritime Alliance
National Estuarine Research Reserve Association
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation • National Weather Service Employees Organization
Natural Resources Defense Council • The Nature Conservancy • Navocean, Inc. • Oceana
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Scripps Institution of Oceanography • Sea Stewards • SeaWeb • Shipbuilders Council of America
UC Davis Bodega Marine Laboratory • UCLA Institute of the Environment and Sustainability
United Fishermen's Marketing Association, Inc. • University Corporation for Atmospheric Research
University of Colorado, Boulder • University of Maryland
University of Miami, Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science
The University of Oklahoma • University of South Florida • Vaisala, Inc.
The Weather Coalition • West Marine • Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution • World Wildlife Fund

The Friends of NOAA are supporters, stakeholders, employees, and partners of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) who join together to encourage Congress and the Administration to adequately support the agency's budget. For more information, visit

www.friendsofnoaa.org or email Rebecca@NMSFocean.org