

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 13, 2020

The Honorable José Serrano  
Chairman  
Committee on Appropriations,  
Subcommittee on Commerce,  
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations,  
Subcommittee on Commerce,  
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Serrano and Ranking Member Aderholt:

We respectfully request the Subcommittee support funding at a level of \$592 million for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) within the FY 2021 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations legislation. NOAA OAR research increases the effectiveness of observations, monitoring, and modeling to help states manage their infrastructure, agricultural resources, fisheries, water resources, and natural disaster planning and response.

Recent OAR supported research has focused on forecasting energy demand scenarios, seasonal wildfires, and large storm events; assessing local impacts of projected sea-level rise; improving seasonal precipitation and drought predictions; and understanding atmospheric rivers and other causes of extreme flooding. OAR also supports basic research that improves understanding of ocean and atmospheric processes. This research is translated into information used by private businesses and public sector managers at all levels of government. Without OAR's research and efforts, NOAA would be unable to fulfill its core mission: to understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans, and coasts; to share that knowledge and information with others; and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources.

Other OAR programs serve a suite of scientific needs from short-term weather forecasting to longer-term oceanic and atmospheric analysis. For example, OAR leads implementation of the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) and also supports the Regional Integrated Science and Assessments (RISA) program to help expand and build the nation's capacity to prepare for and adapt to variations in climate. OAR also maintains global ocean observation programs that provide information essential for accurate weather forecasting of hurricanes, typhoons, and coastal flooding and understanding of ocean acidification and its impacts on marine resources. OAR partners with colleges and universities around the country through the National Sea Grant College Program to enhance the practical use and conservation of coastal, marine, and Great Lakes resources and maintain a sustainable economy and environment.

Approximately one-third of OAR's budget supports sixteen Cooperative Institutes (CIs). CIs are partnerships with university and research institutions located across the greater United States. Established through an open competitive solicitation, CI partnerships provide NOAA with

efficient access to key innovations at the nation's primary houses of science, social, learning, and research, while maintaining the flexibility to adjust workforce capabilities with evolving needs of NOAA. In addition to facilitating long-term, substantive research collaboration, CIs facilitate the training of the nation's next generation of both NOAA's and the nation's scientific workforce. These cooperative entities—already strained by budget cuts—are the very type of innovative partnerships the federal government should be promoting.

In addition to its strong extramural research partnerships, OAR supports several NOAA laboratories—including the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory in New Jersey, the Earth System Research Laboratory in Colorado, the Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory in Washington, the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory in Florida, the Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory in Michigan, the National Severe Storms Laboratory in Oklahoma, and the Air Resource Laboratory in Maryland. These laboratories risk staff reductions and reduced research effectiveness as a result of budget cuts to OAR.

The nation must continue to invest in the environmental sciences through research, observations, monitoring, and modeling, so that we are best positioned to deal with any emerging challenges and capitalize on any emerging opportunities. Reductions to funding for NOAA OAR would have negative implications that extend far beyond any near-term budget savings. Research stemming from OAR has real and positive impacts on the nation's wellbeing, allowing adequate preparation for the impacts of shifts in weather, climate, water supplies, and storms.

Continued robust funding will enable NOAA and its research institution partners to continue their long and proud history of partnering with industries and other government agencies. Their work provides the nation with useable atmospheric and oceanographic data to plan for and respond to the impacts of climate variability and change.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Joe Neguse

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, FY21  
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March 13, 2020**

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