

March 11, 2011

TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE SAM FARR  
BEFORE THE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE,  
AND RELATED AGENCIES

Chairman Wolf, Ranking Member Fattah, and Members of the Subcommittee: Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony to you. I come here today in an effort to support an increase in total programmatic funding to \$6 billion for the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Our oceans and coasts are among our greatest natural resources. Over half of the United States population lives in the 673 coastal counties, with a 5% projected increase in this coastal population by 2015. Coastal and marine waters support over 2.8 million jobs, and the coastal economy generates half of the nation's GDP. The culture, economy, and security of our Nation depend on the health and sustainability of these coastal and ocean assets, yet we are not sufficiently managing and protecting them. We all know that the budget this year is more constrained than ever, however I respectfully urge you to make oceans a funding priority. An increased and sustained investment now will only work to enhance the benefits these resources will provide in the future.

There are several challenges facing NOAA in the near term that justify the need for increasing the Fiscal Year 2012 appropriation to \$6 billion. NOAA has a mandate to maintain its satellite capabilities, which are essential for weather forecasting and other earth observing needs. However, the costs for such satellites and sensors continue to increase with each fiscal cycle. In the President's Fiscal Year 2012 request, 37% of NOAA's entire budget is directed to the National Environmental Satellite Service (NESS). This request for the NESS includes an increase of \$687.8 million for the Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS). While these increases to the satellite budget are necessary to avoid gaps in critical climate data and weather forecasting, this increase should not come at the cost of shifting funds from non-satellite programs across the agency. This is why an increase in NOAA's overall funding over the President's Fiscal Year 2012 budget is desperately needed.

Additionally, recognizing the need for a comprehensive approach to ocean and coastal conservation management, in 2010, the President signed an Executive Order establishing a National Policy for the Stewardship of the Ocean, Coasts, and Great Lakes. This Executive Order adopts the Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force and is a great step forward in strengthening ocean governance and coordination. Additionally it establishes guiding principles for ocean management that will ensure protection, maintenance, and restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems. The President's Fiscal Year 2012 request also includes a reorganization of NOAA that would consolidate the agency's climate capabilities into a single line office called the NOAA Climate Service. This reorganization will improve NOAA's ability to provide data, information, and services to decision makers and the public in a more streamlined and coordinated manner. Our funding request would permit NOAA to meet

current mandates, as well as allow for the increasing responsibilities bestowed upon the agency to manage our ocean, coasts, and Great Lakes in a changing world.

To that end, I want to emphasize the invaluable services and programs of NOAA. Among these are the National Marine Sanctuary Program, the Integrated Ocean Observing Program, the National Sea Grant College Program, the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, and the Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, not to mention the National Weather Service, which provides the weather data on which virtually all Americans rely. Combined, the many NOAA activities support necessary ocean protection, research, exploration, and education, facilitating America's trade and commerce, leisure and recreation, and putting seafood on our tables. Therefore, it is important that we make significant progress toward increasing NOAA's funding to \$6 billion in the very near term. Even though the President's Fiscal Year 2012 budget proposal has made progress toward the necessary funding by requesting \$5.49 billion in NOAA funding, \$2.02 billion of this goes to NOAA's satellite programs and does not explicitly stipulate necessary budget increases for NOAA's many other vital programs. However, the budget does indicate the President's commitment to some programs, identifying the need to support research to further our understanding of ocean acidification and allocating money to implement a coastal and marine spatial planning program. The request also supports funding for expanding stock assessments, assisting working waterfronts, developing regional ocean partnerships, and easing the transition to the new groundfish catch share program along the West Coast by covering observer and other related costs. It is critical that NOAA's many other important programs and responsibilities be funded at a level commensurate with their value added to environmental and human health.

As a Member of California's coastal delegation, I am an intimately connected advocate for coastal and ocean resources. Several of the programs under NOAA's jurisdiction and other private and state entities are represented in my district, making it one of the most dynamic coastal destinations in the country. California's 17th District includes the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the Nation's second largest marine sanctuary supporting one of the world's most diverse marine ecosystems, as well as the National Marine Protected Area Center and Science Institute.

I cannot emphasize enough that the health and sustainability of our ocean and coastal resources is imperative for the future of our nation. Therefore, I would appreciate your support in funding the NOAA and its programs that are of critical importance to my district and to our nation. Please consider this written testimony for the record. I do understand the requested investment is sizable; however, it must be done to protect our nation's largest public trust. We must show our ocean stewardship now. Let's make the necessary strides in the 2012 cycle to give this agency the resources in needs to fully realize its mission, to effectively provide its many products and services to the American people, and to understand and manage the ocean upon which we all increasingly rely.