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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 and for your continued oversight and support of ocean science, conservation and education within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The United States has exclusive environmental and economic jurisdiction over approximately 4.5 million square miles of ocean, which is larger than the total combined land area of all the states and territories. This vast area abuts 672 coastal counties, which comprise a vital part of the U.S. economy by supporting tens of millions of jobs and contributing trillions of dollars a year (about half of our GDP) to our national economy. Currently, our ocean economy supports over 2.8 million jobs, primarily in tourism, recreation, and fishing sectors. Commercial fishing alone contributes over \$70 billion annually to our nation's economy, while over 25 million Americans fish recreationally every year. The economic benefits of our coastal and ocean-dependent industries deliver benefits to construction, tourism, recreation, transportation and numerous other economic drivers across the nation. Ultimately, the health and sustainability of our ocean and coastal resources are imperative for our national economy -- yet budget cuts within NOAA disproportionately draw from its oceans programs. I recognize that these are tough fiscal times in America, and Congress is trimming government budgets across the board; however, NOAA's ocean programs have been particularly hard hit with a nearly 14% reduction since 2010. With satellite procurement costs continuing to grow, it is critical that we maintain a balanced portfolio on investments across all of NOAA's missions<sup>1</sup>.

America's oceans, coasts, islands and Great Lakes are among our greatest assets, and targeted support for necessary ocean protection, research, exploration and education will facilitate continued innovation, commerce, food security and our enduring cultural heritage. Yes, we must make cuts, but we also must think about increasing revenue and decreasing mandatory spending through improved economic performance and resilience in our whole economy. NOAA has been particularly successful to date in reducing inefficiencies, duplication and fragmentation. The agency is already streamlined. In a recently released Government Accountability Office report, listing over 50 federal agencies and programs that could be streamlined or consolidated to provide improved government services per federal expenditure, NOAA's coastal and ocean

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<sup>1</sup> Economic statistics from the National Ocean Economics Program (2009). State of the Ocean and Coastal Economies. Available at: <http://www.oceaneconomics.org/NationalReport/>.

programs were unscathed<sup>2</sup>. The proposed cuts in the President's budget will only succeed in undermining the oceanic and atmospheric management tools upon which our Nation increasingly relies.

Specifically, the budget proposed by the administration endangers the National Ocean Service, fishery conservation programs and highly successful ocean educational programs. It fails to recognize significant contribution that NOAA's oceans and coastal programs add to the strength of our economy. Arbitrary consolidations and reduced funding for these programs are unacceptable and have been broadly criticized by the scientific community who anticipate challenges meeting the agency's public health and safety mandates. From public engagement and education to marine conservation and advances in applied and basic science, NOAA's ocean programs provide technology and infrastructure to support our whole economy and acts as a catalyst for private investments in critical environmental sciences. When Congress has an opportunity to support such a vital, multifaceted and capable agency, it is critical that funding levels be appropriate to the tasks before it.

Last year, you accepted my amendment in full committee to restore essential funding to our most critical ocean and coastal programs. These dollars directly supported achievements in human health and safety, research innovation and long-term preservation of our most valued National resources. During this past year of extreme weather and a record number emergency events, this small redirection of funds allowed NOAA to maintain environmental monitoring capabilities and provide critical public services in FY12. Going into FY13, NOAA's resource base is already trim. Given the agency's long history of successes prioritizing and leveraging public expenditures to meet immediate and long-term needs, continued investments for NOAA's ocean and coastal programs are merited. I thank you for your consideration of this written testimony and sincerely appreciate your continued support of NOAA's ocean and coastal programs.

Sincerely,



SAM FARR  
Member of Congress

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