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The National Association of Marine Laboratories

The Sea Grant Association

The IOOS Association

The National Estuarine Research Reserve Association

The National Marine Sanctuary Foundation

The Coastal States Organization

Restore America's Estuaries

The Association of State Floodplain Managers

for the

Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives

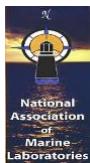
April 4, 2019

In support of FY 2020 Appropriations for the Nation's Ocean, Coastal, and Great Lakes Research, Education, Conservation, and Resource Management Enterprise

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, this joint statement is submitted on behalf of the non-profit organizations listed above who share a **deep and overriding concern for the health of the Nation's oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes**. This Subcommittee is responsible for the health of the ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes enterprise via oversight and resource decision-making related to NOAA, NSF, NASA, and other agencies. That enterprise is a critical part of the security of the Nation as it relates to economic, environmental, national, homeland, energy, conservation, and food security issues. The Administration budget for FY2020 proposes the elimination of extramural funding for this Subcommittee's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes research, conservation, observing, and education programs. We urge the Subcommittee to reinstate these programs based on the significant contributions they make for the health of our ocean and coastal enterprises.

The future well-being of the U.S. is in large part dependent on our ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources. The U.S. ocean economy is estimated to have contributed more than \$320 billion to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and supported 3.2 million jobs in 2015. Over 40% of the U.S. labor force is employed in coastal watersheds. The offshore mineral industry contributed over 170,000 jobs in 2013 and \$122 billion to GDP. Approximately 88,000 square miles of the Nation's coastal wetlands provide nursery areas for commercially harvested fish and places of refuge for migrating birds. Estuaries provide habitat for nearly 70% of the U.S. commercial fisheries catch and 80% of recreational catch. In 2015, the commercial and recreational fishing industry supported 1.6 million jobs and contributed \$208 billion in sales to the U.S. economy. Ocean measurements, observations, and forecasting generate about \$7 billion in revenues annually. For every \$1 invested in environmental restoration, \$4 in economic value is generated by enhancing the tourism and fishing industries.

The ocean and our coasts are equally important for humanitarian, environmental, and health reasons. The oceans are a primary source of food for over one billion people, a globally significant regulator of the earth's climate, the basic source of water for the hydrologic cycle, a cleaning agent that absorbs carbon



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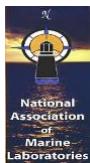
dioxide and generates oxygen, and home to many thousands of flora and fauna. The oceans are a source of discovery to understand and treat cancers and other human diseases. A wide gulf often separates science from the people who need research results to protect and support them. However, the new ocean economy puts science and predictive capabilities to work in a way that can fill critical, fast-rising needs across sectors.

All of the organizations that contribute their names to this statement stand in strong support for the ocean, coastal and Great Lakes research, conservation, observing, and education programs managed by NOAA. Specifically, we are referring to:

- The National Sea Grant College Program and Marine Aquaculture;
- The Integrated Ocean Observing System;
- The National Estuarine Research Reserve System;
- The National Marine Sanctuary System;
- Coastal Zone Management Grants;
- Coastal Resilience Grants (Title IX);
- NMFS Habitat Conservation and Restoration; and
- The Digital Coast Program

Sea Grant is a unique program within NOAA that sends 95% of its appropriated funds to coastal states through a competitive process to address critical issues identified by public and private sector constituents and coastal communities throughout the United States. Sea Grant fosters cost-effective partnerships among state universities, state and local governments, NOAA, and coastal communities and businesses. In 2017, the Sea Grant program helped generate an estimated \$579 million in economic impacts, created or supported over 12,500 jobs, provided 33 state-level programs with funding that assisted 462 communities to improve their resilience, helped nearly 17,700 fishers adopt safe and sustainable fishing practices, helped restore an estimated 700,000 acres of coastal ecosystems, worked with about 1,300 industry, private sector, local, state and regional partners, and supported the education and training of over 1,800 undergraduate and graduate students.

America's estuaries sustain coastal businesses, protect communities from flooding, keep water clean, sustain commercial fisheries, support wildlife, and provide opportunities for recreation. The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) maintains 280 stations that track local water quality, pollution, and weather around the country. These platforms collect data – 42 million data points each year – that track hazardous spills, shellfish industry operations, storm damage and more. Reserves engage more than 36,000 volunteers and community members. Over 3,000 educators and 81,000 K–12 students receive outdoor STEM education. Over 100 universities & research institutions are Reserve partners. In excess of 350 graduate research fellows have studied at a Reserve. Similar to Sea Grant, approximately 98% of federal NERRS funding goes to the communities in which the Reserves are located. NERRS funding also leverages State matching funds raising \$6 million annually to supplement the federal funding; and over the last three years, matching funds invested in the NERRS leveraged an average of approximately \$22 million annually.



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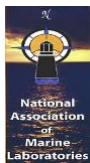


Coastal observing systems are used to gather real time information and turn it into useful products that support coastal residents, coastal economies, and a healthy, sustainable environment. They provide timely, actionable information developed from reliable and user-driven science to provide insight into present and future conditions. The need for data and information to help protect lives, economies and the environment has never been greater. Flood protection, safe and efficient marine operations, fisheries, aquaculture, water quality and safe recreation require an expanded network of observing systems and enhanced analysis that will improve predictive and forecasting capabilities for all users. The Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) is a federal partnership that generates and delivers quality information about the nation's oceans, coasts and Great Lakes. IOOS increases economic efficiency and minimizes redundancy by leveraging non-federal investments. Over fifty percent of the marine data now assembled and disseminated by NOAA's National Data Buoy Center is from non-federal sources. IOOS provides a cost-effective approach to providing the nation with reliable information to enhance maritime commerce; improve weather and flooding forecasting; supporting fisheries, ecosystems and water quality; and enhances our ability to plan for and respond to unforeseen hazards.

The National Coastal Zone Management Program (CZM Program) is a state-federal partnership supporting the effective management, beneficial use, protection, and development of the coastal zone. Healthy coastal resources support business and conservation, and long-term planning is essential for coastal areas to remain the economic drivers they are today. In FY 2017, states and territories matched over \$56.9 million in investment in the CZM Program. The CZM program helps enable our nation's coastal communities to plan for uncertainties and protect lives and investments on the coast. This state-federal partnership ensures the responsible use of coastal resources by balancing the needs of economic development and conservation of natural resources while also planning for potential impacts to a state's coastal zone.

The National Marine Sanctuary System is our essential network of protected waters held in trust for all Americans. Encompassing more than 600,000 square miles, national marine sanctuaries conserve some of the Nation's most critical natural, historic, and cultural resources. They are home to many thousands of species, preserve our nation's maritime heritage, and promote access for exploration and world-class outdoor recreation. Sanctuaries are vital to maintaining the healthy ocean and Great Lakes ecosystems that underpin our productive coastal economies. They generate \$8 billion annually in local economies and support jobs and businesses in fishing, tourism, recreation, and scientific research. Nationwide, communities are coming together to conserve our oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes by expanding existing national marine sanctuaries and proposing new designations for the first time in 19 years. Engaging communities as stewards of these protected waters makes sanctuaries unique and provides a comprehensive, highly participatory approach to managing and conserving marine ecosystems and the Great Lakes for current and future generations.

The Digital Coast effort meets the unique information needs of the coastal management community. It provides access not just to a growing body of coastal data, but also the tools, training, and information needed to make over 5 trillion points of LIDAR, 37 terabytes of imagery, and 800,000 square miles of land cover, collected from both federal and non-federal sources, useful for coastal managers, planners,



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and decision makers charged with managing the Nation's coastal resources. The products and services provided by the Digital Coast include data, information, and training for more than 4,000 coastal communities.

In conclusion, we urge the Subcommittee to continue support for its portfolio of ocean and coastal programs and we offer the following specific programmatic recommendations:

- National Sea Grant College Program, \$93.5 million for research, education, extension, and outreach activities, including aquaculture, STEM education, and Sea Grant Knauss fellowship programs within the NOAA Operations, Research, and Facilities account within the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research;
- Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS), \$50.5 million to support both the regional and national system within NOAA's Operations, Research, and Facilities account, National Ocean Service;
- National Estuarine Research Reserve System, \$30 million in NOAA's Operations, Research and Facilities account within the National Ocean Service; and \$4 million for the Procurement, Acquisition and Construction account within the National Ocean Service;
- Sanctuaries and Marine Protected Areas, \$57 million within the NOAA's Operations, Research, and Facilities account in the National Ocean Service; and \$8.5 million within NOAA's Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction account in the National Ocean Service;
- Coastal Zone Management Grants, \$80.5 million within NOAA's Operations, Research, and Facilities account, National Ocean Service;
- Coastal Resilience Grants (Title IX), \$35 million within NOAA's Operations, Research, and Facilities account, National Ocean Service;
- Habitat Conservation and Restoration (includes Community-Based Restoration Program), \$58 million within NOAA's Operations, Research, and Facilities account, National Marine Fisheries Service; and
- Digital Coast Program, \$5 million within NOAA's Operations, Research, and Facilities account, National Ocean Service.

Ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes research, education, conservation, and resource management programs funded by this Subcommittee are investments in the future health, resiliency, and well-being of our coastal communities which will result in returns of improved quality of life, as well as environmental and economic outcomes many times over the federal investment.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this unified message.