

FRIENDS OF NOAA COALITION

June 13, 2007

Honorable Daniel Inouye
Chairman, Committee on Commerce,
Science and Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Ted Stevens
Ranking Member, Committee on Commerce
Science, and Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Vice Chairman Stevens:

As the House and Senate make plans for conferencing the vital innovation legislation that has passed both bodies, we, the undersigned members of the Friends of NOAA Coalition, would like to thank you for what you have accomplished to date in support of critical federal research and development programs through S. 761. We are writing to urge you to retain the recognition of NOAA's contribution to the nation's competitiveness in any final conference agreement for this legislation.

We are very supportive of the language in S.761, the American COMPETES Act, which emphasizes the importance of ocean and atmospheric sciences and education within NOAA in the context of U.S. competitiveness (Title V). NOAA is an integral partner with NASA and NSF in transitioning earth science basic research into operational systems that increase our ability to understand, predict and respond to environmental events. Through the development and implementation of technologies to integrate information collected from sea, land and space, NOAA is at the forefront in the world in utilizing the next generation of environmental management tools. Such environmental management tools – the ability to predict and analyze present and impending environmental phenomena, hazards, and issues – such as climate change – is of vital importance to the long term economic competitiveness of many different sectors of our economy including fisheries, energy development, the insurance industry, and agricultural production just to name a few. Moreover, the interdisciplinary nature inherent in the conduct of ocean, atmospheric and environmental research educates and trains precisely the kind of scientific and technical problem-solving personnel that industry says they need to meet their workforce needs.

We also wish to offer some comments on Section 1504 of the Senate bill. The language in the section is quite broad, appears to duplicate the review process already used by NOAA and the Inspector General for supported activities, and raises concerns about the lack of safeguards for proprietary information required to be posted on the agency's website. We are quite concerned this provision could adversely impact research and related strategic planning, consensus and regulatory development, and priority setting. To restrict conferences to training, or routine meetings with NOAA employees to discuss ongoing projects or training, could be interpreted to prohibit many NOAA partners from using federal funds to conduct meetings and other outreach activities with stakeholders – such as local and state public policy makers, natural resource conservation organizations, researchers and academics, local business and tourism entities and others – for the purpose of strategic planning and consensus building. Consensus development with stakeholders and others is a fundamental aspect of many NOAA programs designed to establish priorities that are consistent with NOAA's missions while at the same time make the most sense for the affected local, regional or statewide communities. We urge the conferees to revisit this section of the Senate bill and work to eliminate it or modify it so as to not have unintended adverse consequences for vital NOAA programs.

NOAA research yields new understanding, technologies and capabilities that are important to its vast array of stakeholders. We hope that NOAA's contribution to our nation's competitiveness will be included in the final version of the bill.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

University Corporation for Atmospheric Research
Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education
Weather Coalition
National Association of Marine Laboratories
Sea Grant Association
Reinsurance Association of America
The Weather Channel
National Marine Manufacturers Association
United Fishermen's Marketing Association, Inc.
West Marine, Inc.
Joint Ocean Commission Initiative
University of Oklahoma
Department of Oceanography, University of Hawaii
Department of Meteorology, University of Hawaii
North Carolina State University
Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, Georgia
Florida Sea Grant
North Carolina Sea Grant
University of Connecticut
Baruch Institute for Marine & Coastal Sciences, University of South Carolina
Michigan Sea Grant
Cooperative Institute for Limnology and Ecosystems Research, University of Michigan
Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Sciences
Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Southern California
University of Southern California Sea Grant
Mote Marine Laboratory
Dauphin Island Sea Laboratory
Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium
Kewalo Marine Lab, University of Hawaii
Minnesota Sea Grant Program
Campaign for Environmental Literacy
Marine Conservation Biology Institute
Humboldt State University Marine Lab
National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges
Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
Texas A&M University at Galveston
Marine Sciences Research Center of Stony Brook University
DTN-Meteorologix
Center for Coastal Studies and Harte Research Institute, Texas A&M - Corpus Christi
Florida State University Coastal and Marine Laboratory
Scripps Institution of Oceanography
Friday Harbor, University of Washington
Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences, Rutgers University
Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology, University of Hawaii

Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences
Shoals Marine Laboratory, Maine
Shannon Point Marine Center, Western Washington University
Southeast Environmental Research Center, Florida International University
Oregon Institute of Marine Biology, University of Oregon
New York Sea Grant
Ohio Sea Grant College Program
F.T. Stone Laboratory
Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, Inc.
University of Missouri – Columbia
Savannah State University
Delaware Sea Grant
Maryland Sea Grant
Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory
Marine Biological Laboratory, Massachusetts
Hatfield Marine Science Center, Oregon State University
The University of Texas Marine Science Institute
National Estuarine Research Reserve Association
Coastal States Organization
Department of Civil Engineering, University of Minnesota
Jackson School of Geosciences, University of Texas at Austin
Meteorology Program, Iowa State University
Alliance for Earth Observations
Northeastern University
School of Meteorology, University of Oklahoma
National Council for Science and the Environment
American Society for Limnology and Oceanography
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
Columbia University
Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space, University of New Hampshire
Great Lakes WATER Institute, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Cooperative Institute for Climate Applications and Research, Columbia University
Department of Oceanography, Texas A&M University
Virginia Sea Grant
Virginia Institute of Marine Science, College of William and Mary
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
University of Washington
Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant
Marine Biomedicine & Environmental Sciences Center -
Medical University of South Carolina
UCLA Institute of the Environment
The Ocean Foundation
Oceanic Institute
Connecticut Sea Grant
Fugro Pelagos, Inc
Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute
Oregon State University
University of Southern Mississippi

FRIENDS OF NOAA COALITION

June 13, 2007

Honorable Bart Gordon
Chairman
Committee on Science
and Technology
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Ralph Hall
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Science
and Technology
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Gordon and Ranking Member Hall:

As the House and Senate make plans for conferencing the vital innovation legislation that has passed both bodies, we, the undersigned members of the Friends of NOAA Coalition, would like to thank you for what you have accomplished to date in support of critical federal research and development programs through H.R. 2272. We are writing to urge you to include the Senate's recognition of NOAA's contribution to the nation's competitiveness in any final conference agreement for this legislation.

S.761, the American COMPETES Act emphasizes the importance of ocean and atmospheric sciences and education within NOAA in the context of U.S. competitiveness (Title V). NOAA is an integral partner with NASA and NSF in transitioning earth science basic research into operational systems that increase our ability to understand, predict and respond to environmental events. Through the development and implementation of technologies to integrate information collected from sea, land and space, NOAA is at the forefront in the world in utilizing the next generation of environmental management tools. Such environmental management tools – the ability to predict and analyze present and impending environmental phenomena, hazards, and issues – such as climate change – is of vital importance to the long term economic competitiveness of many different sectors of our economy including fisheries, energy development, the insurance industry, and agricultural production just to name a few. Moreover, the interdisciplinary nature inherent in the conduct of ocean, atmospheric and environmental research educates and trains precisely the kind of scientific and technical problem-solving personnel that industry says they need to meet their workforce needs.

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Michigan Sea Grant
Cooperative Institute for Limnology and Ecosystems Research, University of Michigan
Chesapeake Biological Laboratory, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Sciences
Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies, University of Southern California
University of Southern California Sea Grant
Mote Marine Laboratory
Dauphin Island Sea Laboratory
Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium
Kewalo Marine Lab, University of Hawaii
Minnesota Sea Grant Program
Campaign for Environmental Literacy
Marine Conservation Biology Institute
Humboldt State University Marine Lab
National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges
Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences
Texas A&M University at Galveston
Marine Sciences Research Center of Stony Brook University
DTN-Meteorologix
Center for Coastal Studies and Harte Research Institute, Texas A&M - Corpus Christi
Florida State University Coastal and Marine Laboratory
Scripps Institution of Oceanography
Friday Harbor, University of Washington
Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences, Rutgers University
Hawaii Institute of Marine Biology, University of Hawaii
Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences
Shoals Marine Laboratory, Maine
Shannon Point Marine Center, Western Washington University

Southeast Environmental Research Center, Florida International University
Oregon Institute of Marine Biology, University of Oregon
New York Sea Grant
Ohio Sea Grant College Program
F.T. Stone Laboratory
Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institution, Inc.
University of Missouri – Columbia
Savannah State University
Delaware Sea Grant
Maryland Sea Grant
Mount Desert Island Biological Laboratory
Marine Biological Laboratory, Massachusetts
Hatfield Marine Science Center, Oregon State University
The University of Texas Marine Science Institute
National Estuarine Research Reserve Association
Coastal States Organization
Department of Civil Engineering, University of Minnesota
Jackson School of Geosciences, University of Texas at Austin
Meteorology Program, Iowa State University
Alliance for Earth Observations
Northeastern University
School of Meteorology, University of Oklahoma
National Council for Science and the Environment
American Society for Limnology and Oceanography
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
Columbia University
Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space, University of New Hampshire
Great Lakes WATER Institute, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
Cooperative Institute for Climate Applications and Research, Columbia University
Department of Oceanography, Texas A&M University
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