November 20, 2020

Dear Chairman Moran, Chairman Serrano, Ranking Member Shaheen, and Ranking Member Aderholt:

On behalf of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership, which represents our nation’s leading ocean science, research, and technology organizations from academia, industry, and the larger nonprofit sector (to include aquariums, philanthropy, and associations), I want to thank you for your work on fiscal year (FY) 2021 Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations. Widespread proposed increases in appropriations to our nation’s ocean science agencies and programs will help ensure our ocean security, which enables us to properly forecast, prepare, mitigate, and resiliently recover from events that come from the ocean. As you continue with the appropriations process, on behalf of COL, I respectfully request the final spending bill reflect spending levels no less than the highest level provided in the House and Senate spending bills for the topline numbers at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Science Foundation (NSF) and at NASA Earth Science. I also request you consider robust funding to the following programs and directives within NOAA, particularly the National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) highlighted below, while also funding the NSF INCLUDES (Inclusion across the Nation of Communities and Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science) program and NASA’s Earth-facing missions at the no less than FY 2020 spending levels.

**National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP)**

Of particular importance are appropriations to NOAA for NOPP, a partnership program whose more than 200 projects over the last 20 years cover topics such as ocean exploration and mapping, technology development, environmental monitoring, and resource management and whose many successes include projects such as the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS), the Argos Project, and the JASON Project. Appropriations to NOPP are even more critical in the post-COVID environment to ensure wise use of limited resources that advance our nation’s economic, environmental, and national security interests. I respectfully request that the final spending package include funding for NOPP at no less than the $5 million included in the House bill.

**Office of Ocean Exploration and Research (OER)**

Thank you to both chambers for proposing an increase to NOAA OER, whose responsibility to explore is necessary if we want to know what is in the ocean, which in turn allows us to
ultimately understand and sustainably manage our ocean. Due to the cooperative nature of the ocean exploration enterprise, which includes other federal and state agencies, nonprofits, private industry, and academic institutions, I appreciate the Senate report language supporting the Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute, competitive awards for deep ocean acoustic research, work with the Department of Defense, and the collection of open source data for the oceanographic community. Additionally, many of these partnership activities could be facilitated through NOPP. I respectfully request the final spending bill provide both the $44 million for OER and the report language included in the Senate proposal.

**Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS)**
Thanks to the Senate and the House for support of IOOS and for proposing funding levels of $40 million and $40.5 million, respectively, both of which are above FY 2020 enacted levels. Both chambers included important report language appropriating funds to continue the pilot program to enhance the capacity to monitor and detect harmful algal blooms, highlighting the importance of closing the gaps in surface mapping, and expanding the use of underwater gliders. I respectfully request the committee provide funding for IOOS at no less than the $40.5 million included in the House bill and that final report language also include Senate language on test bed deployment and operation for a complete end-to-end HAB detection and monitoring system.

**NOAA Education, Bay-Watershed Education and Training (B-WET), and Environmental Literacy Program (ELP)**
Thank you to both chambers for recognizing the importance of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education and extension programs, despite repeated attempts by the administration to eliminate many of them and for providing funding at (Senate, $30.2 million) or above (House, $33.5 million) FY 2020 enacted levels to NOAA’s Office of Education. Both chambers also provided support for the B-WET program at levels above what was enacted in FY 2020 and importantly, the Senate included $5.3 million for competitive educational grants including the Environmental Literacy Grants in addition to the $7.8 million for B-WET regional programs. I respectfully request the committee provide funding for NOAA Education at no less than the $33.5 million provided in the House bill and include the funding levels for both Environmental Literacy Grants and B-WET regional programs in the Senate bill.

**National Sea Grant College Program and Marine Aquaculture Program**
I appreciate both chambers’ repeated rejection of the administration’s proposed elimination of the National Sea Grant College Program and respectfully request the committee provide funding for the National Sea Grant College Program and the Marine Aquaculture Program at the Senate-proposed levels of $76 million and $13.5 million, respectively.

In closing, I again thank you for your work on FY 2021 appropriations and respectfully request that in the final appropriations bill for FY 2021, you fund each agency and program listed above at no less than the highest level provided in the House and Senate appropriations bills. These investments in ocean science and technology will ensure our ocean security, keeping our ocean and our people healthy and our nation safe, secure, and economically competitive. COL,
and the member institutions we represent, would be pleased to serve as a resource should you have questions or need any additional information.

Respectfully,

Jonathan W. White, RADM (Ret.), USN
President and CEO
Consortium for Ocean Leadership

Consortium for Ocean Leadership Member Institutions
Alaska Ocean Observing System • Alaska SeaLife Center • Aquarium of the Pacific • ARCUS • ASV Global, LLC • Bermuda Institute of Ocean Sciences • Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences • Chevron USA • College of William & Mary • Consumer Energy Alliance • Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences • Dauphin Island Sea Lab • Duke University • Earth2Ocean • East Carolina University • Esri • Estuary & Ocean Science Center, San Francisco State University • Exocetus • FAU Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute • Florida Institute of Oceanography • Harte Research Institute • Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute • IEEE Oceanic Engineering Society • Institute for Global Environmental Strategies • JASCO • Johns Hopkins University APL • L-3 MariPro, Inc. • Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory • Liquid Robotics, Inc. • Louisiana State University • Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium • MARACOOS • Marine Technology Society • Massachusetts Institute of Technology • MBARI • Monmouth University Urban Coast Institute • Moore Foundation • Moss Landing Marine Laboratories • Mote Marine Laboratory • Mystic Aquarium • National Aquarium • NERACOOS • New England Aquarium • NOIA • North Carolina State University • North Pacific Research Board • Nova Southeastern University • Old Dominion University • Oregon State University • Pennsylvania State University • Rutgers University • Saildrone • Savannah State University • Sea-Bird Scientific • Severn Marine Technologies, LLC • Shell • Skidaway Institute of Oceanography of UGA • Sonardyne, Inc. • South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium • Stanford University • Stony Brook University • SURF • Teledyne CARIS • Texas A&M University • The IOOS Association • U.S. Arctic Research Commission • U.S. Naval Postgraduate School • UCSD Scripps Institution of Oceanography • University of Alaska Fairbanks • University of California, Davis • University of California, Santa Barbara • University of California, Santa Cruz • University of Delaware • University of Florida • University of Hawaii • University of Maine • University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science • University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth • University of Miami • University of New Hampshire • University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill • University of North Carolina, Wilmington • University of Rhode Island • University of South Carolina • University of South Florida • University of Southern California • University of Southern Mississippi • University of Texas at Austin • University of Washington • University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee • Vulcan, Inc. • Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution