



National Association of Marine Laboratories

c/o Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, MA 02543

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June 9, 2005

The Honorable Sherwood L. Boehlert
Chairman
Committee on Science
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Boehlert:

On behalf of the National Association of Marine Laboratories (NAML), I would like to congratulate you and Chairman Ehlers of the Subcommittee on Environment, Standards, and Technology for your leadership with respect to the *United States Tsunami Warning and Education Act*, H.R. 1674. While tsunamis cannot be prevented or avoided, it is essential that the U.S. be better prepared to face a tsunami through early detection and warning. This can be made possible through an investment in ocean and coastal research, education, technology and infrastructure. NAML believes that this bill is a welcome step in that direction and for that reason; we are pleased to offer our support for this legislation.

NAML understands first hand the devastating effects resulting from insufficient knowledge, technology, or infrastructure for addressing natural disasters such as tsunamis. NAML is a nonprofit organization of over 120 member institutions (list attached) representing coastal, marine, and Great Lakes laboratories stretching from Guam to Bermuda and Alaska to Puerto Rico. Members serve as unique "windows on the sea," providing information on the rich environmental mosaic of coastal habitats as well as offshore oceanic regions and the Great Lakes. NAML is comprised of three regional associations which offer access to local communities at the grass roots level: the Northeastern Association of Marine and Great Lakes Laboratories (NEAMGLL); the Southern Association of Marine Laboratories (SAML); and the Western Association of Marine Laboratories (WAML). Through these unique national and regional networks, NAML supports wise coastal decision-making, local land management and the protection of natural resources, and works together to achieve goals that benefit the environment, the economy, and society through oceanic and Great Lakes research, education and outreach.

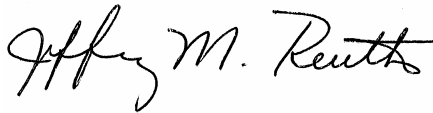
In particular, NAML strongly supports provisions within H.R. 1674 that address the increased need for developing new, and modernizing existing, ocean and coastal monitoring systems. Nationally, the need for an integrated ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes observing system is vast, as these systems offer benefits to human and marine health, weather and climate nowcasts and forecasts, homeland security, tourism and coastal business development, and resource management, to name a few.

In the same vein, an integrated network of “tsunami warning centers,” found within this legislation, is as important to at-risk coastal communities as an integrated ocean and coastal observing system is to the security of the nation as a whole. In order to prepare for a disaster of the same magnitude as the tsunami that swept across the Indian Ocean in December, continual deep ocean and coastal monitoring is needed. H.R. 1674 addresses this through the creation of a Pacific Tsunami Warning Center and a West Coast and Alaska Tsunami Center.

NAML is pleased that H.R. 1674 addresses tsunami education and outreach activities as well as the importance of Federal, State, Local and international collaboration in ocean science. Not only is a well-trained and knowledgeable workforce necessary in developing effective technologies used to predict and respond to natural disasters like tsunamis, but a greater public understanding of the situation and knowledge of the proper mechanisms for response is key. Our NAML Laboratories are ready and eager to participate in research, education and outreach that is a vital part of your bill and encourage you to also make use of these capabilities within NOAA’s Sea Grant College Program.

In closing, NAML would like to thank you for acknowledging the importance of tsunami preparation and education. We appreciate your demonstrated support for ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes marine science. If NAML can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Mr. Joel Widder, who handles NAML government relations, at 202-289-7475.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey M. Reutter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'J' and 'R'.

Jeffrey M. Reutter
President

National Association of Marine Laboratories

cc: Honorable Bart Gordon
Honorable Vern Ehlers
Honorable David Wu