



National Association of Marine Laboratories

PRESIDENT

Anthony Michaels
Wrigley Institute for Environmental
Studies
University of Southern California
P.O. Box 5069
Avalon, CA 90704
p 213-740-6780 · f 213-740-7620
tony@usc.edu

CHAIRMAN

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC POLICY
James Sanders
Skidaway Institute of Oceanography
10 Ocean Science Circle
Savannah, GA 31411
p 912-598-2400 · f 912-598-2310
jim.sanders@skio.usg.edu

PAST PRESIDENT

Jeffrey M. Reutter
F. T. Stone Laboratory
Ohio Sea Grant College Program Ohio
State University
1314 Kinnear Rd.
Columbus, OH 43212
p 614-292-8949 · f 614-292-4364
reutter.1@osu.edu

TREASURER

Alan M. Kuzirian
Marine Biological Laboratory
7 MBL Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543
p 508-289-7480 · f 508-289-7900
akuziria@mbi.edu

SECRETARY

William M. Wise
Marine Sciences Research Center
Stony Brook University
Stony Brook, NY 11794-5000
p 631-632-8656 · f 631-632-9441
wwise@notes.cc.sunysb.edu

WASHINGTON REPRESENTATIVE

Joel Widder
Lewis-Burke Associates, LLC
1341 G Street, NW, 8th Fl
Washington, DC 20005
p 202-289-7475 · f 202-289-7454
jwidder@lewis-burke.com

October 5, 2006

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Chairman, Subcommittee on Science,
State, Justice and Commerce
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman, Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice and Science
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
Ranking Minority Member,
Subcommittee on Science, State, Justice
and Commerce
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee
on Commerce, Justice and Science
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wolf, Ranking Member Mollohan, Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Mikulski:

As you and your colleagues prepare to conference on the FY 2007 CJS/SSJC Appropriations bill, on behalf of the National Association for Marine Laboratories (NAML), I would like to urge the conferees to give priority support to important research and education programs under the committee's jurisdiction, particularly the National Science Foundation (NSF), the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).

NAML is a nonprofit organization of over 120 member institutions employing more than 10,000 scientists, engineers, and professionals and representing ocean, coastal and Great Lakes laboratories stretching from Maine to the Gulf of Mexico to the west coast, from Guam to Bermuda and from Alaska to Puerto Rico. NAML labs support the conduct of high quality ocean, coastal and Great Lakes research and education in the natural and social sciences and the effective use of that science for decision-making on important issues that face our country. We are careful stewards of federally-funded research involving the oceans, coasts and Great Lakes and, thanks to our local connections, have the ability to bring the excitement of ocean and marine research, science and education to all Americans. However, this would not be possible without sustained and adequate federal support for NSF, NOAA and NASA – particularly for their competitive extramural research and education programs.

National Science Foundation. We are very encouraged by and extremely appreciative of the efforts of the House and Senate to provide NSF with essentially the President's request in FY 2007 as part of the American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI). NAML is extremely supportive of the ACI and appreciates wholeheartedly the need for this Nation to enhance its ability to use new knowledge and technologies to

The National Association of Marine Laboratories (NAML) is a nonprofit organization of over 120 member institutions representing coastal, marine, and Great Lakes laboratories in every coastal state, 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 member laboratories conduct research and provide a variety of academic, education and public service programs to enable local and regional communities to better understand and manage the ocean, coastal and Great Lake environments. NAML is comprised of three regional associations: 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).

National Association of Marine Laboratories

be innovative and maintain our competitive edge in today's global market place. Your efforts on behalf of NSF this year are a step in that direction.

NSF is of particular importance to NAML because of the depth and breadth of its competitive, merit-based programs in environmental research and education, primarily in the geosciences and biological sciences directorates. NSF also provides vital support for the research and education infrastructure needs of the ocean, coastal and Great Lakes science community through a number of programs, including the NSF-wide major research instrumentation program, the developing Ocean Observing Initiative, and the ongoing Improvements in Facilities, Communications, and Equipment at Biological Field Stations and Marine Laboratories (FSML) program.

Field stations and marine laboratories are usually off-campus facilities, located in the natural habitats of terrestrial, freshwater, and marine ecosystems, that support research and education by providing essential infrastructure and fostering an atmosphere of mutual scientific interest and collaboration in research and education. The FSML program has been fairly level at \$2.5 million per year for a number of years while the demand for these funds has continued to grow. The success rate for this program has been significantly below the foundation-wide average, even though the quality of the proposals received is quite high. As a result, many excellent proposals are left unfunded. We are encouraging NSF to enhance its support for the FSML program particularly as the activities in the Ocean Observing program and the National Ecological Observatory Network get underway. Increasing the program over time to a level of \$10 million would reenergize the community of labs and field stations and greatly assist them in meeting their infrastructure challenges.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. To conserve our coastal resources and ensure their continued economic vitality, it is imperative that Congress fund important coastal, ocean and Great Lakes research, education and management programs at NOAA. Therefore, NAML strongly urges the conferees to fund NOAA at the Senate-passed level of \$4.4 billion in FY 2007. This is a small investment given that over half of Americans live near the coast and fully one-half of the nation's gross domestic product, \$4.5 trillion annually, is generated in coastal watershed counties.

Extramural research is critical to accomplishing NOAA's mission. NOAA operates a number of programs that directly enable marine laboratories to assist NOAA in this regard. For example, Sea Grant is NOAA's primary university-based program in support of coastal resource use and conservation. Sea Grant research and outreach programs promote better understanding, conservation and use of America's coastal resources. In short, Sea Grant is "science serving America's coasts." We strongly urge the conferees to support the Sea Grant program at the level recommended by the Senate.

Another vital NOAA program is the Ocean Exploration/National Undersea Research Program – a program that takes the next step beyond ocean exploration to provide an ecosystem perspective and enhanced understanding of our nation's oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes. In so doing, this program directly addresses the recommendations made by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy (2004) calling for an ecosystem-based approach to management. To address NOAA's priority of protecting, restoring, and managing coastal and ocean resources through this new approach, this NOAA program provides data on commercially important fish, coral reefs and deep water corals, biodiversity, methane hydrates, biotechnology, coastal hazards and important underwater habitats and their associated organisms.

NOAA manages a number of additional extramural programs, such as research on invasive species, oceans and human health, and important marine education programs. We urge the conferees to be as supportive as possible of the NOAA programs that provide marine laboratories with opportunities to partner with the agency. The levels recommended by the Senate will allow NOAA and its partners to move forward and enable NOAA to carry out its missions on a national, regional and local level.

National Association of Marine Laboratories

National Aeronautics and Space Administration. In regard to NASA, the agency's support for earth and space sciences is vital in helping us better understand our own planet. For example, NASA's Earth Science Applications theme benchmarks practical uses of NASA-sponsored observations from Earth observation systems and predictions from Earth science models. NASA implements projects that carry forth this mission through partnerships with public, private, and academic organizations. These partnerships focus on innovative approaches for using Earth science information to provide decision support that can be adapted in applications worldwide.

NAML urges the conferees to continue actively encouraging NASA to engage in more meaningful partnerships with the academic research and education community through enhanced support for their various competitive grant programs that address critical research issues related to the earth sciences, space sciences, as well as ocean, coastal and Great Lakes issues. In addition, we hope that you and your colleagues will support a budget for NASA science that will keep pace with the Nation's research needs and allow for future growth in an effort to better understand the planet on which we live.

Our members recognize the severe budget constraints you and the conference committee must confront and we deeply appreciate all the support the committee has provided our Nation's research and education enterprise throughout the years. We believe such support is an important investment in the future health and well being of the country and hope the conferees will continue to give these programs the level of priority they deserve.

Sincerely,



Anthony F. Michaels
NAML President

Director, Wrigley Institute for
Environmental Studies
University of Southern California

The National Association of Marine Laboratories