



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@mbl.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

September 11, 2006

The Honorable Richard Pombo
Chairman, Committee on Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nick Rahall II
Ranking Member, Committee on Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pombo & Ranking Member Rahall:

On behalf of the National Association of Marine Laboratories (NAML), I am writing to recommend that your Committee schedule a markup for the NOAA Organic Act (HR 5450) this year. As an organization representing the ocean, coastal and Great Lakes research and education communities with large stakes in the livelihood of NOAA, we believe that issues related ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes research and education should be elevated to the highest policy level. This legislation, which was cleared by the House Science Committee in June, is a step in that direction and is deserving of your committee's support.

NAML strongly believes that ocean and coastal policy decisions should be based on sound science. Therefore, we particularly support the provisions within H.R. 5450 that create a Science Advisory Board within NOAA, establish a new Deputy Assistant Secretary for Science and Education leadership position, and re-align NOAA's functions to support ecosystem-based management approaches. These provisions will ensure that emerging problems affecting human health, environmental vigor, coastal industries, and port security, to name a few, will be addressed through strong, reliable scientific research.

In addition, we are pleased that much of the bill is dedicated to ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes research and education. In order to address these issues appropriately, we need a well-trained and informed workforce. NAML laboratories provide expert training for marine biologists and oceanographers, but their capacity must be enhanced to meet future needs. Therefore, we support the Committee's efforts to enhance ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes education and outreach programs at all levels.

We realize that H.R. 5450 has been designed with the purpose of providing organization for NOAA. However, there are a number of programs and issues – recommended by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy (2004) – that are important to the ocean, coastal and Great Lakes research community, and in the context of this bill, we would like to offer some comments about them.

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

Although efforts are made in H.R. 5450 to coordinate Federal agencies involved in ocean and coastal research and national and international programs regarding coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes observing systems, further investment is still needed to ensure that these systems are sustained and that they incorporate the long-term monitoring efforts of the nation's coastal and marine laboratories. As you know, integrated observations offer critical information on coastal processes necessary for addressing issues, such as the health of humans and marine life, weather and climate nowcasts and forecasts, homeland security, and resource management.

Coastal and marine laboratories have been addressing this need for many years, however, funding has been difficult to sustain. If such a national observing system is adequately funded, NAML could be instrumental in its development, thanks to its collective, diverse array of observing platforms and programs, its strong communication network, and specific connectivity projects. NAML enthusiastically supports the recommendations made by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy to develop a sustained integrated ocean observing system.

Additionally, it is imperative that the U.S. invest in the infrastructure of its coastal and Great Lakes laboratories. Currently, funds are inadequate in supporting basic laboratory facilities, instrumentation, support systems, computing facilities, and ship access. The final report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy makes several recommendations on the need to develop and enhance the nation's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes infrastructure.

NAML would like to thank you and the Committee for your leadership in acknowledging the importance of ocean, coastal and Great Lakes research and education and the essential role that NOAA plays in advancing these issues consistent with the agency's mission. NAML is wholeheartedly supportive of the work of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy and believes implementation of its recommendations will ensure that our Nation's oceans and coasts receive adequate support and attention as their health directly impacts us all.

Thank you for the opportunity to present these views. If NAML can provide any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me or Mr. Joel Widder, who handles government relations for NAML, at 202-289-7475.

Sincerely,



Anthony F. Michaels
President, National Association of Marine Laboratories