



National Association of Marine Laboratories

June 5, 2006

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

The Honorable Sherwood L. Boehlert
Chairman, Committee on Science
U.S. 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, Technology, and Standards for your leadership with respect to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). We believe that issues related ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes research and education should be elevated to the highest policy level. This legislation is a step in that direction and for that reason NAML supports your latest version of a NOAA Organic Act – H.R. 5450.

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 the important issues that face our country. Through national and regional networks, NAML labs –

- Promote and support basic and applied research of the highest quality from the unique perspective of coastal laboratories;
- Assist local, regional and state entities with information related to the use and conservation of marine and coastal resources using ecosystem-based management approaches;
- Recognize, encourage and support the unique and significant role that coastal laboratories play in workforce development, enhancing science/ocean literacy, and in conducting education, outreach, and public service programs for K-12 audiences; and
- Facilitate the exchange of information and relevant expertise between NAML member institutions, government agencies, and the private sector.

We ardently believe that ocean and coastal policy decisions should be based on sound science. Therefore, NAML supports the provisions within H.R. 5450 that create a Science Advisory Board within NOAA, establish a new Deputy Assistant Secretary for Science and Technology 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, NAML is pleased that an entire section of the bill has been dedicated to ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes research and education. In order to address these issues

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

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 in enhancing ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes education and outreach programs at all levels. NAML would also like to see NOAA restructured in a way that allows it to be more engaged with academic university science and education through enhancing competitive grant programs, such as the National Sea Grant College Program, the National Undersea Research Program (NURP), and other extramural efforts.

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 – that are important to NAML but were not incorporated in the bill. Although efforts are made in the organic act 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.

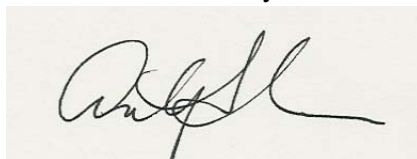
Coastal and marine laboratories have been addressing this need for many years, however, funding has been difficult to sustain. If such a national observing system is adequately funded, however, NAML could be instrumental in its development, thanks to its collective, diverse array of observing platforms 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 national ocean and coastal infrastructure.

NAML would like to thank you and the Committee for 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 equally 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. An organic act for NOAA is essential to the modernization of the agency, and we urge the Committee to take the necessary steps in ensuring that this important piece of legislation is implemented.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light beige rectangular background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'Anthony F. Michaels'.

Anthony F. Michaels
President

National Association of Marine Laboratories