



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dr. Anthony F. Michaels
President
National Association of Marine Laboratories
Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies
University of Southern California
AHF 232
Los Angeles, California 90089

MAR 29 2007

Dear Dr. Michaels:

Thank you for your letter highlighting the opportunity the joint resolution on FY 2007 year-long funding presents to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), to demonstrate its recognition of the importance of merit-based extramural research as a key component in the execution of its mission. NOAA recognizes the significant research and education contributions of its extramural partners, including the members of the National Association of Marine Laboratories (NAML), and the role these contributions play in helping NOAA accomplish its science-based mission.

As you note in your letter, NOAA does have some discretion in the allocation of its FY 2007 appropriations. In exercising this discretion, we have carefully considered how best to balance our mission critical requirements, NOAA's strategic plans, preserving our long term partnerships, and the President's FY 2007 initiatives. Extramural research plays a role in all of these areas, and NOAA will continue its commitment to funding extramural research in the short and long-term.

To ensure the success of a research program, it is important for investments to be sustainable. In funding activities in FY 2007, we have sought to build a bridge between our FY 2006 activities and the President's FY 2008 budget request. The approach we have taken acknowledges the need for merit-based extramural research to be supported so promising research can continue, and new lines of investigation can be selected with the expectation of support in the future.

I am proud of what NOAA and its extramural research partners have accomplished in the past, and what we undoubtedly will accomplish in the future. I look forward to working with the NAML to make sure our collaborative partnerships with the extramural research community remain strong, and continue to contribute to the execution of NOAA's mission in FY 2007 and beyond.

Sincerely,

Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr.
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans and Atmosphere

THE ADMINISTRATOR

