

103
**REAUTHORIZATION OF THE OCEAN AND COASTAL
PROGRAMS OF NOAA**

Y 4. M 53: 103-68

RING

Reauthorization of the Ocean and Coastal Programs of NOAA ARE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANOGRAPHY, GULF OF
MEXICO, AND THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON
MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED THIRD CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

ON

NOAA REAUTHORIZATION

NOVEMBER 3, 1993

Serial No. 103-68

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REAUTHORIZATION OF THE OCEAN AND COASTAL PROGRAMS OF NOAA

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 1993

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANOGRAPHY, GULF OF MEXICO, AND THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF, COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES,

Washington, DC.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 2:40 p.m., in room 1344, Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Solomon P. Ortiz [chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Present: Representatives Ortiz, Green, Eshoo and Weldon.

Staff present: Sheila McCready, Staff Director; Robert Wharton, Senior Professional Staff; Terry Schaff and Chris Mann, Professional Staff; John Aguirre, Clerk; Lisa Pittman, Minority Counsel; Richard Russell, Minority Professional Staff; and Margherita Woods, Minority Professional Staff.

Mr. ORTIZ. The Subcommittee will come to order.

STATEMENT OF HON. SOLOMON P. ORTIZ, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, AND CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANOGRAPHY, GULF OF MEXICO, AND THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF

Mr. ORTIZ. Good afternoon. I would like to welcome all of you here today on behalf of the Subcommittee on Oceanography, Gulf of Mexico and the Outer Continental Shelf.

Today the Subcommittee meets to discuss the reauthorization of the ocean and coastal programs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

One year ago, after several years of effort, the first comprehensive NOAA authorization was signed into law. This legislation provided specific authorization for many of NOAA's activities for the two-year period ending October 1, 1993. We are now faced with the task of reauthorizing most of these activities before the next appropriations cycle. I have been working for some time now on legislation to extend the authorizations under this Committee's jurisdiction through fiscal year 1998.

Before this legislation is introduced, there are several issues which I feel must be addressed. Most important is the strategic review which NOAA has undertaken of its mission and the plan which has resulted. In order to authorize specific accounts and activities for an extended period of time, the Subcommittee needs to understand any changes to NOAA's priorities. If there are plans

for major new activities or activities which will be discontinued, we will need to evaluate these plans during the reauthorization process.

Specifically, I understand that NOAA has asked the Office of Management and Budget to reorganize the structure of NOAA's budget to correspond with the structure of the Strategic Plan. Clearly, if this is to be done, we will need to be provided with much more detail and then work closely with NOAA to determine how this will impact the reauthorization legislation.

Another factor which needs to be addressed in the context of the reauthorization legislation is the administration's National Performance Review. In addition to the many government-wide reforms which NOAA will be required to comply with, there are several specific recommendations which affect NOAA directly. Included are directions for NOAA to open the oceanographic fleet to public and private competition, establish user fees to help offset costs, and extend the concept of the ecosystem management through multiagency projects.

The Subcommittee hopes to hear what plans NOAA has to meet those goals in case there is a need for implementing legislation.

Mr. ORTIZ. I know there will be some other Members arriving in a few minutes, but I would like to include the statements of the Members who will come later or who will not be able to attend this hearing.

[The statement of Mr. Fields follows:]

STATEMENT OF HON. JACK FIELDS, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, AND RANKING MINORITY MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES

Mr. Chairman, I want to compliment you for scheduling this hearing and I look forward to early action on your legislation to reauthorize the "wet" programs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

It is amazing to me to learn that while NOAA was created over 23 years ago, since that time only a single comprehensive authorization act for that agency has been signed into law. I am confident that your bill, Mr. Chairman, will make it through the legislative process.

Having said that, however, I have a serious concern with NOAA's apparent lack of commitment to pursue its oldest charge—nautical charting and geodesy. I have communicated to NOAA that the Port of Houston—one of the largest in the world—has not had accurate tidal measurements taken in almost 60 years! I understand that other large port areas around the country, including San Francisco and New York, also share this dubious honor. This missing critical information, as well as accurate current, wind, and salinity measurements, risks human life, vessels, cargo, and the environment. NOAA needs to gather current environmental data, update its nautical charts, and regain the trust of the shipping industry, recreational boaters, and the ports.

To this end, I have authored a provision in Chairman Ortiz's bill which would allow the agency to retain a portion of the proceeds from the sale of nautical charts to improve marine safety. It is a small amount, especially when NOAA was hoping to receive monies from the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund for this work, but it is a start.

Thank you, Chairman Ortiz. I appreciate this opportunity to express my views and I look forward to the testimony of Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, Ms. Diana Josephson.

Mr. ORTIZ. I would like to introduce Ms. Diane Josephson. We are pleased to have you back with us today, Ms. Josephson, Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce.

I am sorry, but when someone else arrives I will have to leave because I am a conferee on DOD.

Welcome back, and you can begin your statement at any time.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE DIANE H. JOSEPHSON, DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR OCEANS AND ATMOSPHERE, NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Ms. JOSEPHSON. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to appear before the Subcommittee to discuss the reauthorization of the environmental stewardship programs of NOAA.

Before I begin, I wish to thank the Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee for their continuing support and patience as we build a new senior management team and reshape NOAA's structure to reflect the Administration's priorities.

The Administration believes that a healthy economy and a healthy environment go hand in hand. The new team at NOAA is working extremely hard to reach the goal of achieving a healthy environment through research, management and services efforts associated with its marine fisheries, protected species and coastal zone management missions.

I would like to take this opportunity to share our vision for NOAA's programs under the Committee's jurisdiction. These are programs which will take us well into the first decade of the 21st century.

On July 15, 1993, NOAA released its Strategic Plan for 1995 to 2005. From the start, we involved our top managers and their staffs in developing the Plan. In all, 15 teams totalling 400 people from across NOAA were involved in developing the Plan.

Team members continue to meet to refine implementation strategies and to improve the Plan. We view the Plan as dynamic and have invited comments by the end of November from all constituents, including the Congress, our Federal and State partners, academia, industry, conservation groups and the general public. We intend to review and revise the Strategic Plan as needed, at least on an annual basis, and we are using it to guide our budget development.

The Plan recognizes two equally-important missions for NOAA: environmental stewardship and environmental prediction and assessment. I would like to focus my remarks on our environmental stewardship programs which will be of greatest interest to Members of the Subcommittee.

The Plan highlights the importance of environmental stewardship through four program elements: the building of sustainable fisheries, recovering protected species, improving the health of coastal ecosystems and modernizing navigation and positioning services. I will discuss each of these in turn.

I will start with building sustainable fisheries. The problems facing the multibillion dollar commercial fishing industry and tens of millions of marine anglers are increasingly highlighted in the national press. Uncontrolled participation, overfishing and overcapitalization have resulted in the overutilization of 43 percent of the Nation's assessed fishery resources. Just recently, for example,

NMFS reported a 40 percent decline in the first six months of this year in Maine cod landings. The cause is well-known: open access fisheries resulting in overcapitalization exemplified by a race for fish and often overfishing.

We believe government should and must play a proactive role in restoring the economic viability of the fishing industry. We estimate that a fully-productive industry could increase commercial fishing net revenues annually by \$2.9 billion.

Management of U.S. fisheries is at a critical juncture. In an effort to solve these problems, all eight Fishery Management Councils are developing plans to control access to the fisheries. Ultimately, we hope that market forces, rather than government edict, will bring the system into a more rational balance.

The Strategic Plan outlines a seven-step program to build sustainable fisheries. First, NOAA will expand and improve its scientific information and assessments of fishery resources. We do not know, for example, the status of 34 percent of the species which we are responsible for managing. NOAA is committed to completing its IT-95 and Marine Ecological Data base Systems, the so-called MEDS. These national computer information systems will be located at nine major sites and collect fisheries-related data. They will include up-to-date stock information, combine new computer hardware and software, and provide on-line public access.

Second, NOAA has embarked on a program to utilize state-of-the-art advanced sampling technologies, including hydroacoustics, laser technology and optical sensors to improve fishery predictions.

Third, NOAA will work with the Fishery Management Councils to adopt policies to manage economic growth better and promote a healthy fishing industry. As the Strategic Plan says, "NOAA has no preconceived notion on how to assist the fishing industry during the transition" to a market-based fishery. Working directly with this Committee, we hope to develop a variety of tools to assist the industry, including assuring safe, high quality seafood, Saltonstall-Kennedy grants to improve industry efficiency, and continued compensation for gear and vessel losses.

Fourth, we will ensure adequate compliance with Federal laws and regulations.

NOAA will continue to coordinate with the Department of Defense to tap into the so-called "dual-use" technologies. One promising area includes use of technology for an acoustic system that has the potential to enhance greatly NOAA's fishery enforcement mission.

A fifth element of the Build Sustainable Fisheries program would reduce the wasteful bycatch of nontarget species. We must continue to improve devices to screen out protected and other nontarget species from fishing gear.

The Plan's sixth element calls for acceleration of growth in U.S. marine aquaculture. Marine aquaculture has the potential to provide new sources of income and employment in rural areas, as demonstrated by the Atlantic salmon in eastern Maine. It can provide consumers a reliable alternate domestic food supply and may also help to restore depleted commercial fisheries by reducing fishing pressure on those stocks.

Yet we are falling behind the rest of the world in production of high-quality shrimp, salmon, sea bass and oysters through aquaculture and mariculture. The Strategic Plan calls for the development of environmentally-acceptable, cost-effective aquaculture systems.

A seventh area covered in the Plan calls for the promotion of global stewardship by fulfilling the Nation's commitments at the U.S. summit. Some of these commitments focused on fisheries and conserving coastal resources. NOAA is prepared to work closely with other Federal agencies and multilateral development banks in providing the technical expertise to implement those recommendations.

Taken as a whole, we believe that application of NOAA-wide capabilities to address these seven points will lead to the restoration of a thriving domestic, commercial, and recreational fishing industry.

Next, I would like to discuss the program element, recovery of protected species.

NOAA's Strategic Plan will promote the full recovery of depleted species and the maintenance of healthy marine ecosystems. Thirty marine systems are listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered, and two species of marine mammals—the northern fur seal and Atlantic bottlenose dolphin—are categorized as depleted under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

There are 214 salmon runs considered at risk due to commercial exploitation and habitat degradation. There are continual conflicts between the need to implement recovery actions and legitimate commercial concerns. In order to avoid such conflicts, NOAA must be proactive rather than reactive to each new crisis.

This is already evident in our handling of sea turtles. We have expanded recovery efforts beyond the southeast to include the mid-Atlantic and Pacific Basin areas.

We are now conducting several status reviews per year as well as population assessments for other marine mammals stocks. We are moving aggressively to establish recovery plans, develop conservation plans and convene workshops which bring all the affected parties together before a crisis occurs.

The Strategic Plan proposes a four-point program to restore and maintain protected species:

First, we will work to reduce interactions between protected species and commercial fishing operations. New working models will be developed to resolve conflicts between exploiting fishing resources and conserving marine mammals and other protected species.

Second, we must improve our understanding of the status of all the protected species and the impact of human activities on these stocks.

Third, the Plan calls for the aggressive implementation of recovery and conservation plans. By 1994, we hope to have approved recovery plans for 11 protected species.

Fourth, NOAA will be taking a proactive approach to prevent listings. NMFS has initiated status reviews of species potentially at risk of becoming extinct. NMFS will attempt to investigate the causes for species declines and will work with others to reverse

those declines in order to protect species better before they need to be listed.

The third environmental stewardship program element is coastal ecosystems health. Maintaining biodiversity and long-term productivity is NOAA's vision for the Nation's coastal and marine habitats. To move toward this vision, the paradigm for managing coastal ecosystems must shift from a fragmented to an integrated process, from a site-specific to ecosystem-wide context, and from a reactive to a preventive approach.

Today, over 54 percent of the United States' population lives in the coastal zone, including the Great Lakes, which consists of only 10 percent of the total land mass of the United States.

Coastal recreation and tourism attracts millions of visitors each year. Over 75 percent of total commercial landings and 80 to 90 percent of the recreational catch comes from species that are dependent on coastal habitats during some part of their life cycle. Seventeen million Americans use these waters for recreational fishing, generating \$18 billion annually.

The Plan proposes a five-point program to improve the health of coastal ecosystems:

First, we plan to integrate coastal ecosystem management within NOAA and other Federal and State agencies. By 2005, we hope to have 35 federally-approved State coastal management programs. We will work with them in the development of coastal nonpoint source pollution control programs.

The second element of the coastal ecosystem program calls for actions to better assess threats to the health and productivity of the Nation's coastal resources. Just two examples are, first, watershed assessments to determine the effects of cumulative coastal development, toxics, habitat loss and nutrient over-enrichment; and, second, improved delivery of critical information on sensitive estuarine habitats for response to spills.

The Plan's third element proposes a joint NOAA-State effort to monitor changes in the health of coastal ecosystems.

The fourth element proposes to increase our understanding of the causes and significance of ecosystem changes. For example, ecosystem health studies are planned for selected regional watersheds to determine the cumulative effects of human-induced ecosystem stress in order to provide an improved scientific basis for management decisions in those areas.

As another example, NOAA participated in the development of an Aquatic Nuisance Species Program designed to prevent the potential introduction and dispersal of aquatic nuisance species in U.S. waters through prevention, control, research and education efforts. The program will address our responsibilities under the Non-indigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990.

The final element of the coastal ecosystem health program proposes an education and outreach program first, to improve public understanding of the value of coastal ecosystems; second, to transfer technology; and, third, to develop training programs.

Taken together, these efforts to apply NOAA-wide capabilities, in partnership with academia and other governmental resource managers, will enhance our ability to manage and conserve marine species and ecosystems before they are damaged.

The final program element is modernize navigation and positioning services. NOAA will meet the Nation's needs for the next decade's marine and aeronautical navigation systems that electronically integrate accurate chart data, global positioning system-based locations, and real-time environmental information.

A basic responsibility of NOAA, deeply rooted in its history and written into law, is to provide charts and related information for the safe navigation of marine and air commerce.

These products and services are even more vital today than they have been in the past. Transportation, defense, science, public works and recreation depend on these services. No other agency or organization in the country gathers these data or responds to these needs.

But, today, NOAA faces the prospect of being unable to discharge these responsibilities effectively for a number of reasons:

First, NOAA's charting products are becoming inadequate because of lack of maintenance.

Second, new navigation and positioning technology has improved productivity, thereby changing user requirements for these services. The new technology of digital chart data for use with the rapidly-emerging electronic chart systems can help avoid accidents such as the recent *Exxon Valdez* disaster.

In the air, a new generation of navigation data sets will be required for the developing air traffic control Advanced Automation System and the new microwave or satellite-based instrument landing systems.

Finally, there is an increasing demand for consistent, compatible data bases for the increasing use of Geographic Information Systems, the so-called GIS. This investment has limited value if the data are not based on accurate, compatible coordinates.

The Strategic Plan describes a program to update nautical surveys, develop and distribute digital nautical information and modernize marine forecasting.

Providing modern aeronautical charts is another important NOAA role. Airspace and airport capacity is projected to increase by 20 percent by 1999 and another 20 percent by 2005. NOAA plans to fully support the FAA's requirements for digital data and products and for new products to support Global Positioning System-based navigation systems.

Supporting the four environmental stewardship program elements is an infrastructure portfolio that devotes significant attention to the need for infrastructure improvements. Among these are bringing NOAA's 443 staffed facilities, when necessary, into environmental compliance. NOAA has more than a thousand buildings at its facilities, including laboratories, office buildings and forecast offices.

The Plan, of course, also devotes considerable attention to the environmental assessments and prediction mission of NOAA. For example, ocean color and surface winds from the Japanese satellite ADEOS will be made available in support of ocean science and operations.

In addition, NOAA's CoastWatch directly supports intergovernmental cooperative coastal science and management by providing

near real-time high resolution satellite data to Federal, State and local resource managers and scientists.

In summary, the Strategic Plan covers all of NOAA's major activities. It is a living and evolving document which will chart our course into the next century and which reflects President Clinton's belief that there is no inherent conflict between economic growth, public safety and a sound environment. We welcome your comments and those of your constituents on how to improve the Plan.

That concludes my statement, and I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Mr. GREEN. [Chairing.] Thank you, Ms. Josephson.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Josephson can be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. GREEN. Congresswoman Eshoo.

Ms. ESHOO. Yes, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome, and thank you for your testimony and your work in this area.

I have a couple of questions I would like to ask, and it relates back to some of the things that I have said in previous hearings. I am a Californian, and part of its magnificent coast is in my district. I represented it as a locally elected person for a decade before coming to the House of Representatives, so I understand firsthand how CZMA Funds are applied.

We know that there really is not very much in the pot relative to management of our coasts in California, which boasts, I think, one of the most magnificent coasts in the entire world. So my question is related to NOAA's funding of CZMA and you may be addressing the shortcoming of funds in local management.

Given the possibility of NOAA restructuring its offices and its programs, what consideration will be given to restoring the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, which, as I understand it, was subsumed under the National Ocean Service by President Reagan, and perhaps bring it back to an administrator level? In response to what I just outlined, do you have anything that you can tell us about that?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. During this first year we decided to focus on developing the overall approach for NOAA through the Strategic Plan development. We are then looking at organizational issues. I am sure you have had experience during your time as an elected official in California that when you do a reorganization it tends to absorb every bit of energy that you have. And so our initial conclusion was to focus on the substance and then look at what we came up with to see whether any organizational changes arise out of that.

Ms. ESHOO. Well, maybe you can tell me in this Plan that is being developed how coastal management is spoken to as a priority within NOAA. I guess that is the better way to ask it.

Ms. JOSEPHSON. Right. Within the Plan, healthy coastal ecosystems, which includes coastal zone management as well as habitat protection and restoration and all other elements—coastal programs, coastal science efforts—are all brought together in one planning element to improve the health of the coast. It is one of the four environmental stewardship elements in the Plan and has a major priority for us on the environmental stewardship side.

As we work with the Plan, it may well be that we will consider some organizational changes in NOAA not limited to looking at the coastal issues but others. But we have not reached that decision yet.

Ms. ESHOO. Can you make any kind of recommendation for this to be lifted as a priority within NOAA?

The reason I ask this is because you can tell, it is obvious, it is a source of frustration to me. There are blessings, and there are burdens in all of these things. And you gave lengthy testimony on things I would never argue with because they are all things that we applaud and we want to see happen.

I have trouble ferreting out, from what you have said, how on-the-ground managers for coastal zone management, human beings that are on the ground that need to protect the coast day in and day out, how what you just spelled out relates to them in their day-to-day lives and then produce what we are looking for way back here.

I sometimes think that inside the beltway we have trouble relating back to what really needs to happen. I think this is a program that is not being very well-served, and I can't help but come away sensing that it has not been bumped up as a real priority. I will keep saying it until, hopefully, I am satisfied that it is.

So maybe you can enlighten us and tell us how the coastal zone managers are going to be cheered by what you are going to do because it, indeed, is a priority in NOAA.

Ms. JOSEPHSON. I think the coastal zone managers who participate in the development of the Plan are cheered because it reflects their concerns and their priorities.

Ms. ESHOO. Tell me what that is, though.

Ms. JOSEPHSON. It is, basically, to implement the Coastal Zone Management Act. And one new element in the law, the nonpoint source pollution aspects—as you know, in the 1994 budget, we managed to get the initial funding for that, and hopefully, in the 1995 budget process, we will be able to add to that, which is a specific additional element.

I don't know if you are aware, but Jeff Benoit, from the State of Massachusetts, has just come onboard as the new director of the OCRM office; and, of course, that has been a position which has been vacant since the last Administration. He came onboard the week before last, so it is now 10 days. We expect Jeff to provide leadership in this area for us as part of the new Administration team.

The suggestion you make about elevating the coastal programs has been made to us by others; by some of the constituent groups, other Members of Congress. It is clearly something that we will look at, but we have not made a decision or a recommendation within the Administration at this point.

I hear what you are saying about the additional focus that that might be given by elevating the position from within NOS to reporting directly to the Under Secretary, and I will relay your interest to Dr. Baker, and we will discuss it further.

Ms. ESHOO. And so you will get back to this Committee? How will we know what part of the Plan is either added or revised to take into consideration what—

Ms. JOSEPHSON. I do not think the Plan will be revised to take into account the organizational location. In a sense, the Plan does not reflect any organization within NOAA. It talks about what NOAA is going to do rather than the operational mechanisms for doing it. But I will certainly get back to you with a response.

Ms. ESHOO. How do you plan to implement it if the only thing you have is a mission and a charter? Ultimately, it needs to hit the ground; right?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. Right. Well, we are going to have a final review on Friday of the implementation plans for 1994 for each element in the Strategic Plan. So there is an implementation plan for healthy coastal ecosystems; we have asked the managers to come in with their concrete, down-to-the-ground proposals for what we can do in 1994 within our existing base to increase emphasis in the coastal areas.

We have also, of course, reflected this in our 1995 budget request, which is based on the strategic plan, and hopefully, there will be some significant results as a result of this. I cannot guarantee that, obviously, since we are in discussions with OMB at the moment. And as you know, the budget deficit is a very real and practical problem which all of us in the Federal Government are facing.

Ms. ESHOO. Well, let me just thank you for trying to answer my question. I don't know if I can take that answer back to my constituents and have them understand it, with all due respect to you.

I think that what I am suggesting is that as I have regard for the more sophisticated, high-end scientific undertakings of NOAA, but we have a day-to-day responsibility in terms of the stewardship of the management of our coast—of our coasts, I should say. And I think that the plan and its execution and the staffing, however that is done, needs to speak to that as well.

Most frankly, I am having difficulty translating that out of what you are saying, but I look forward to your bringing that back to us and letting us know, informing us of how that is actually built in so that it does happen.

We are all aware of the deficit and the debt. That is not going to go away for a while. But that cannot become an excuse for why we do not do the things that we are charged with doing. So you can tell that I feel strongly about it, and I believe that the appropriation bill has requested of NOAA to submit a spending plan on how the funds will be allocated, and so perhaps when that comes forward we will know better how much of a priority this actually is.

Ms. JOSEPHSON. Yes.

Ms. ESHOO. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. JOSEPHSON. Let me make one other comment. We are following up this hearing with a series of briefings for staff and also for Members on the Strategic Plan. What I would like to do is set up a more detailed discussion with you and get to some of the greater details that you are interested in.

Ms. ESHOO. Well, I think I have made them known. It is not all that complicated. What I hope would be attentive to that is what the plan for the dollars are as well.

Ms. JOSEPHSON. OK, very good.

Ms. ESHOO. Again, that is where the rubber meets the road. You can put all kinds of things in a plan and it sounds terrific, but if in

fact the Agency does not say, this is a priority because these are the dollars that we are putting to it, this is how the people at home are going to be able to carry out their responsibilities, then it is only a dust collector.

Ms. JOSEPHSON. Right.

Ms. ESHOO. OK. Thank you.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Congresswoman Eshoo.

Mr. Weldon, do you have a statement and/or questions?

Mr. WELDON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I would ask unanimous consent to have my statement entered into the record.

Mr. GREEN. Without objection.

[The statement of Mr. Weldon follows:]

STATEMENT OF HON. CURT WELDON, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM PENNSYLVANIA, AND RANKING MINORITY MEMBER, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANOGRAPHY, GULF OF MEXICO, AND THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF

Mr. Chairman, let me begin by complimenting you for holding this hearing on the reauthorization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) programs. In the past, NOAA's programmatic authorizations have largely gone unauthorized, and I am pleased that you are taking the lead role in ensuring that NOAA's programs are fully authorized.

NOAA appears to be at a crossroads. NOAA has recently finished drafting a 10-year strategic plan. The plan appears ambitious, and if the \$1.9 billion estimate for NOAA's fleet modernization plan is any gauge, very expensive. To add to NOAA's strategic plan, the Administration has released *Creating a Government that Works Better & Costs Less*. The Vice President's reinventing government plan includes a number of recommendations from privatization to increased user fees which, if implemented, will impact NOAA's programs and budget.

I am looking forward to NOAA's insights on how all these pieces fit together within the confines of today's tight budgets. I am also interested in the future of two programs which this Subcommittee has recently held hearings on.

On August 4, 1993, this Subcommittee held a hearing on the potential for advancing marine research through the use of existing military technology. At the hearing, both NOAA and the U.S. Navy seemed excited about the possible environmental science spin-offs of systems such as the Navy's Integrated Undersea Surveillance System (IUSS). I understand that the Navy plans to begin mothballing the IUSS starting in Fiscal Year 1995. This troubles me, and I will be interested in hearing from our distinguished panelist about what, if any, coordination is taking place between NOAA and the U.S. military on the future of IUSS and other "dual use" technologies.

I am also interested in following up on our September 30, 1993 hearing. During that hearing which focused on Russian nuclear dumping in the Arctic Ocean, it became clear that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is disengaging from its responsibilities to study the impact of radioactive pollution on the Arctic marine environment. The NOAA co-chairs with EPA the Task Force on Arctic Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, and I will be interested to learn if NOAA will be able to pick up the slack if EPA's role is reduced.

Again, Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this important hearing, and I look forward to working with you to craft a cost-effective authorization for NOAA.

Mr. WELDON. Mr. Chairman, let me first of all apologize to our witness for Chairman Ortiz and I having to go out. We are in the middle of a conference on the defense bill, and that is why he had to leave and why I came late, so I apologize.

I appreciate your testimony, and I have a couple of items I would like to discuss with you briefly, and perhaps if they cannot be answered here orally, you can provide the answers for the record.

Ms. Josephson, I have been very much interested and concerned for the last several months with the whole issue of nuclear contamination. Chairman Ortiz held a hearing at my request about a month ago. We went into the issue, had NOAA here and represent-

atives of our military establishment, especially as relates to the former Soviet Union.

Since NOAA is a coleader of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program, I was wondering how much money and effort NOAA plans to spend on monitoring nuclear contamination in the Arctic. Do you have a specific plan for that, and if so, could you provide some detail for us?

Also, in 1995, our country will be hosting an international conference on land-based sources of marine pollution, and I was wondering if NOAA has—in its involvement for that conference, is nuclear contamination of the Arctic going to be one of the issues discussed at that conference?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. Yes, it is going to be discussed at that conference.

And the answer to your first question, I would like to submit something for the record, and we will also submit some detail on your second question.

[The following information was submitted subsequent to the hearing by Ms. Josephson:]

NOAA has recently taken the lead for the U.S. participation in the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP), and headed the U.S. Delegation to the 4th AMAP Task Force Meeting in Reykjavik, Iceland, October 11-14, 1993. NOAA is presently working through the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) to develop a more proactive role in AMAP and to identify the resources required to do so. NOAA does not presently have any resources in its budget that are specifically designated for AMAP. However, we do have ongoing programs that contribute to the AMAP Project Directory.

The key concern regarding the potential for migration of contaminants from Russian waters has been focused on the radionuclide disposal problem. The Arctic radioactive studies now being conducted through the Department of Defense, under the program management of the Office of Naval Research, should provide preliminary findings on any potential imminent threat. NOAA is participating in these studies on a cooperative basis by collecting and analyzing sediment and biological samples, including tissue samples from species used in native subsistence, in order to help determine the present amount and source of radionuclides in the U.S. Arctic.

In the long-term, decomposing containers and reactors also are a significant source of concern. This concern can only be addressed through a long-term environmental assessment and monitoring program. NOAA is working with the IARPC to formulate an interagency plan to assess the potential long-term problem associated with radionuclides and other contaminants (e.g., persistent organic compounds) so that recommendations can be made upon which to base policy and decision-making.

To my knowledge, NOAA has not been involved in the preparations for the 1995 international conference on land-based sources of marine pollution. I will look into this matter and see if land-based sources of nuclear contamination of the Arctic are going to be addressed and, if not, urge that this concern be considered.

Mr. WELDON. I appreciate your working with us, as you have done in the past on this issue, so that we can together raise the awareness of the international community on the seriousness of this issue, especially within the confines of the former Soviet republics.

Looking at the 10-year plan of NOAA, the strategic plan and I think the somewhat ambitious—and most of which I will be supportive of—cost estimates, I guess my question relates to the Vice President's plan to reinvent government and how that will tie in with NOAA's obvious need for additional funding. What impact do you see happening with NOAA in line with the Vice President's plan?

For instance, what kind of user fees is NOAA contemplating; what privatization options are you considering or are available for consideration; and specifically, are you considering privatizing the NOAA corps, the function of the NOAA Corps; and what are you doing to address the concepts of ecosystem management, which was specifically outlined in Vice President Gore's proposal?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. There are three specific items which apply to NOAA in the Vice President's proposal. One has to do with conducting a private-public competition in the fleet modernization, and we are looking at that right now. It will not be reflected in the Plan, which is due this month, but it will be reflected in next year's Plan; and obviously, we will keep you and the staff informed as we go through the discussions and development of our action plan.

Another element in the Vice President's review is the effort which is ongoing with this Committee at the moment, looking at how we might fund some of the fishery management activities, and as this is a joint Administration-congressional-industry activity, which started about 6 weeks ago, and hopefully will be reflected in the reauthorization of the Magnuson Act sometime next spring. So both those activities are under way.

As far as the more general activities of reinventing government such as changes in the personnel system, the administrative side of government—we already are receiving some changed direction in the personnel area, a delegation of authority down to ourselves and to our managers. I believe that over time this will result in our being able to reduce the number of people who are involved in these administrative systems and hopefully free up resources that can be applied to the program, which I think is going to be a major advantage in light of the budget reduction and budget deficit situation we find ourselves in.

Within NOAA itself, we have established four teams to look at reinventing government issues, personnel being one of them, everything to do with people; other processes, like procurement and so on; looking at organizational issues; and also how we might go about identifying additional resources. So we do have our own in-house NOAA effort looking at these issues.

Mr. WELDON. Thank you.

Along that line, with using the 1994 appropriations baseline as a start, what do you anticipate being the need, in terms of NOAA's budget, to implement your strategic plan over the next 10 years? What kind of increase are we talking about? Do you have any idea?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. We have not costed it for 2005. We did some preliminary estimates for the first five years, which, obviously, are large. Now we are at the stage in our budget discussions with OMB where I cannot talk specifically about figures, and obviously, it would appear in light of the constraints on the Federal Government—we have identified where we would like to be in 2005, but whether we get the resources that will enable us to be there at that time is an open question. We are going to have to deal with it year by year.

So when we get our fiscal year 1995 budget allocation from OMB later this fall, we will look at it and then we will reiterate the Stra-

tegic plan and our implementation plan for it in light of the reality of the resources that are at our disposal.

Mr. WELDON. Will you have, Ms. Josephson, to go along with the 10-year strategic plan, a cost estimate, if you were able to achieve the optimum, which would be to fully implement the strategic plan; and then allow us to see what, in fact, decisions we are going to have to make if the budget numbers are severely less than that, which is probably going to be the case?

Will that be available to us to look at and to analyze over the next five to ten years?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. I will have to see whether or not the Office of Management and Budget allows us to give you such a figure. I am not clear, but I will go back and raise that question.

[The following information was supplied subsequent to the hearing:]

At this time, NOAA is unable to provide the full estimated cost of the Strategic Plan over the next 10 years. Some of the components of the Strategic Plan are expected to have decreasing costs over the next 10 years, while others are expected to be gradually increasing. It is NOAA's hope that overall costs of the Strategic Plan will lessen in the final 5 years of the Strategic Plan.

Mr. WELDON. I would think if you could give us what your optimum would be, and then as we see what the numbers are, coming out of OMB, we can begin to understand what the implications of those numbers are and what it is you want to achieve over the next 10 years.

The final point deals with dual-use technologies and coordination with the military, and we have discussed that at length in hearings in this Subcommittee as well.

I was just wondering what the impact and whether NOAA is, in fact, coordinating with the military—especially the Navy, as they downsize, and specifically, the integrated underseas surveillance system. Is that going to be impacted, and to what extent, in terms of NOAA's use of that for marine research?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. We do coordinate very closely with the military in these areas. A new task force has just been established of program managers, rather than scientists. There was a first group that was science-based, looking at the implications of defense technologies for the civil side, and they completed their task sometime this spring-summer.

Now there is a new task force on the application side, on which we are represented, that is just starting to work. So we are very hooked in and very interested in the application of these technologies to our missions.

On the second part of your question, about the IUSS, that does raise some serious questions for us, because we have already established that, for example, in enforcement for NMFS, in the ability to track larger marine mammals, and also in identifying vents in the ocean floor, there are some very possible aspects of the IUSS. But for us, for example, to take it over from the Navy would be a financial impossibility.

So we will be concerned if it is decided that the IUSS should no longer exist, wondering what the civilian side of the house could do to obtain data on some basis from an IUSS were there to be a de-

fense cutback. It is something we are still working on with our naval counterparts.

I don't know if you want to add something.

Mr. WELDON. Before you do that—and I will let you respond—one of the things I would add is that several of us serve on both the Armed Services Committee and the full Committee and this Subcommittee, and we would like you to keep us appraised as to your interactions with the Navy, what is happening there; and then we can take appropriate action not just as leaders on this Subcommittee and Committee but also in the Armed Services Committee to try to address the concerns that you have from the civilian side.

We do not want to see the Navy do something precipitously that will adversely affect what you are attempting to accomplish. And we know you will not have the funding to take over the operation of the IUSS.

Ms. JOSEPHSON. Right.

Dr. OSTENSO. Yes, Mr. Weldon, I can elaborate on that just a little bit.

We are working closely with the Navy at all levels. At the highest level, Secretary Brown has sent a letter to the Secretary of Defense asking before he precipitously closes the IUSS or over-the-horizon radars, that we sit down and talk and look at their broad use for civilian applications; and he has responded he is going to do that.

You are, I am sure, quite aware of the strategic environmental R&D program, and as we speak, three proposals that have been prepared jointly by NOAA and the Navy are going forward to that source of funding because it clearly fits the spirit of the—

Mr. GREEN. Doctor, could you state your name for the record?

Dr. OSTENSO. I am sorry, my name is Ned Ostenso. I am the Assistant Administrator for Oceanic and Atmospheric Research.

So we have a very ongoing dialog at all levels of the Navy, and we are getting a very positive response from the Navy.

Mr. WELDON. Just keep us informed.

Mr. OSTENSO. We will.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, Mr. Weldon.

There is a proposal in the National Performance Review legislation to establish innovation funds to improve efficiency. Can you enlighten the Subcommittee as to how and what that involves?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. No, I cannot. I am sorry. I can go back and submit something for the record, but we have not been involved in that at this point.

Mr. GREEN. I also notice, and you testified last week, and also in the National Performance Review it mentions, NOAA will experiment with private competition to fulfill your mission. I know we had a hearing last week, but just so the record will reflect your intention, if you would just briefly state your discussion last week at the hearing when we had a number of panelists.

Ms. JOSEPHSON. Prior to the National Performance Review, we had made a request in the 1994 budget for \$2 million for the National Ocean Service to do a vessel charter experiment, to give us experience with chartering, and that is under way in fiscal year 1994.

In addition, we are looking at the National Performance Review requirement for a private-public competition in each of the three areas of our fleet—oceanography, hydrography and fisheries research. We are developing plans right now on how to implement the National Performance Review.

This will not be reflected in the fleet modernization plan that we are sending up to you this month, but it will be reflected in the plan for next year. We will keep you and your staff informed as we go down this road, but we have not reached any specific decisions yet.

Mr. GREEN. Is NOAA trying to change the budget structure to arrange it along the structure of the strategic plan?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. Yes, briefings have already been set up with staff and with individual Members to brief you on this so you understand how the fiscal year 1994 budget structure will fold into the Strategic Plan. We waited until the end of the session because, obviously, everybody has been very busy; but over the next two months and into early next year, for the next two or three months, we plan to bring everybody up to speed on this so that this will not be a great surprise.

Mr. GREEN. My next questions concerning NOAA, do you have any views on how long the reauthorization should be enacted? Of course, if I was in your shoes I would say 25 years, but I understand. Do you have any suggestions?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. Yes, we have looked at that. Authorizations can end up being limiting if life changes a lot. Particularly in NOAA where there are many new technologies that are coming on line, our sense is that at this particular period of time a 3-year authorization would be the length of time which would be most useful to us. It would give us enough certainty so we can plan, but also provide us and you with the flexibility to incorporate and reflect the changes in technology that are going to come on line in many of our areas over the next five to ten years. So that would be our recommendation.

Mr. GREEN. Anywhere from five to ten?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. No, three years.

Mr. GREEN. Three years. The Subcommittee is considering including a provision in the reauthorization which would extend the deadline for States without coastal zone management plans to submit nonpoint source pollution control programs. This would allow States, like Texas, which are currently trying to get into the program, the time they need to develop a plan without penalizing them for trying.

Would NOAA support that provision?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. We recognize the inconsistency that exists, and we will be happy to work with staff on coming up with an appropriate solution, yes.

Mr. GREEN. And one last question I forgot.

In a recent GAO report on Federal research laboratories, the facilities report identifies a sea turtle and shrimp lab at an old army barracks in Galveston, Texas, as being in poor condition and not designed as science laboratories.

Is NOAA planning to relocate or do you have any knowledge of that from the GAO report?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. We do have problems at that lab. As the GAO report points out, NOAA has problems in many of its facilities, as do many other of the research agencies. We have proposed as part of our fiscal year 1995 budget process, a more robust program to deal with these issues and it remains to be seen exactly how we fare in the budget that comes up to you.

In the case of fisheries that would include the fisheries labs. We do not have any specific plan to relocate that lab, but we hope to be able to incorporate in our construction account resources to deal with the problems in our labs, including that lab. But the specifics, I cannot speak to at the moment.

Mr. GREEN. Well, thank you—oh, one more question from Congressman Weldon.

Mr. WELDON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Congressman Fields wanted to be here but could not, but he asked me to raise an issue with you, which I would ask you to respond to.

Would NOAA support an extension of the coastal zone management program development grants, which I understand expired recently—last year, actually—to allow States like Texas and Ohio to enter into the CZM program?

Ms. JOSEPHSON. Can I respond for the record? I am not aware that they cannot apply.

Mr. WELDON. Evidently, the grant authorization expired last year, and he would like to know if that could be extended so States like Texas and Ohio could apply.

Ms. JOSEPHSON. OK, I will respond for the record.

Mr. WELDON. OK, thank you.

[The following information was supplied by Ms. Josephson subsequent to the hearing:]

Section 305 of the CZMA provides for 2 years of development funds to States to develop a coastal zone management program. After 2 years, if a State has not submitted an approvable program, funding is the State's responsibility to continue program development.

NOAA recognizes that 2 years is a very short amount of time to develop a coastal zone management program with all its necessary elements. NOAA would consider relief from this 2-year limitation to allow the States which have made substantial progress toward completing their CZM Programs, additional time to complete program development.

The concurrent development of a coastal nonpoint program presents a challenge to States developing coastal zone management programs. The fact that §305 States are not authorized to receive §6217 funds for the development of coastal nonpoint programs limits the ability of such States to produce both a coastal zone management program and a coastal nonpoint program within the limited time frame. NOAA looks forward to discussing with Congress ways of addressing the statutory problem creating this inequity.

Mr. GREEN. Thank you, no other questions. This concludes the testimony for this hearing.

Ms. Josephson, I want to thank you for the hearing and for sharing your testimony and insights with us today. The testimony and discussions we have had are particularly useful to the Subcommittee as we draft the reauthorization for NOAA's ocean and coastal programs.

As you know, the Congress is now demanding that programs be authorized, and points of order have been raised against budgets for entire agencies. We do not want to have to enter into yearly

fighters on the Floor to protect NOAA's funding nor do we want to have to push authorization language through the Congress yearly.

It is my understanding that the Subcommittee will push ahead to introduce a multiyear authorization for NOAA, and I hope that NOAA will work closely with the Subcommittee as we may move forward with this legislation, and that will realize the importance that we give to these authorizations.

I would like to leave you with one other concern. Many of the actions which NOAA is taking or may take in the near future fall under the reorganization and reprogramming report requirements of the standing NOAA authorization law. I want you to understand that the Subcommittee takes these requirements seriously, and we hope that NOAA will follow the intent of these provisions. We want to work with you in your efforts to move forward, and I hope and expect this to be an interactive process involving both the executive and legislative branches of government.

Several of the Subcommittee members and I have additional questions for the witness, and we would appreciate your replying in writing when we submit them.

[The information can be found at the end of the hearing.]

Mr. GREEN. Thank you again for being here today, and the Committee is adjourned.

Ms. JOSEPHSON. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 3:30 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned, and the following was submitted for the record:]

STATEMENT OF
DIANA H. JOSEPHSON
DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY FOR OCEANS AND ATMOSPHERE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANOGRAPHY, GULF OF MEXICO, AND THE
OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF
MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES COMMITTEE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 3, 1993

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am Diana H. Josephson, Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce.

I am pleased to appear before this Subcommittee to discuss the reauthorization of the so-called "wet side" programs of NOAA. Before I begin I wish to thank the Chairman and Members of this Subcommittee for their continuing support and patience as we build our new senior management team and reshape NOAA's structure to reflect the Administration's priorities.

The Administration believes that a healthy economy and a healthy environment go hand in hand. The new team at NOAA is working extremely hard to reach the goal of achieving a healthy environment through research, management, and services efforts associated with its marine fisheries, protected species, and coastal zone management missions.

I would like to take this opportunity to share our vision for NOAA programs under the Committee's jurisdiction. These are programs which will take us well into the first decade of the 21st century.

On July 15, 1993, NOAA released its Strategic Plan (Plan) for 1995-2005. From the start, we wanted the Strategic Plan to represent the direction that NOAA wants to pursue. To accomplish this end, we involved our top managers and their staffs in developing the plan. In all, fifteen teams with representation across NOAA were established to develop the Plan.

Team members continue to meet to refine implementation strategies and to improve the Plan. Because we view the Plan as dynamic and believe that it must adapt to real world conditions, we invite comment from all constituents -- including Congress, our Federal and state partners, academia, industry, conservation groups, and the general public. We intend to review and revise the Strategic Plan as needed, at least on an annual basis. We are using the Plan to guide our budget development.

I have briefed many of you already about the general outline of the Plan. NOAA's mission includes two equally-important components: environmental stewardship to conserve and wisely manage the Nation's marine and coastal resources, and environmental assessment and prediction to safeguard life and

property and ensure and enhance sustainable economic opportunities.

I would like to focus my remarks on our environmental stewardship programs which will be of greatest interest to Members of the Subcommittee.

The Plan highlights the importance of environmental stewardship through the building of sustainable fisheries, recovering protected species, improving the health of coastal ecosystems, and modernizing navigation and positioning services.

BUILD SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

The problems facing the multibillion dollar commercial fishing industry and tens of millions of marine anglers are increasingly highlighted in the national press. Uncontrolled participation, overfishing, and overcapitalization have resulted in the overutilization of 43 percent of the Nation's assessed fisheries resources. Just recently, for example, the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) reported a 40 percent decline in the first six months of this year in Maine cod landings. The cause is well-known: open access fisheries resulting in overcapitalization exemplified by a race for fish, and often overfishing. Unfortunately, the financially-stressed fishing

industry may be incapable of remaining viable during the time necessary to rebuild wild stocks.

We believe the government should and must play a proactive role in restoring the economic viability of the fishing industry. We estimate that a fully productive industry could increase commercial fishing net revenues annually by \$2.9 billion, resulting in hundreds of thousands of new jobs, large benefits to recreationists, consumers, and the American people in general.

Management of U.S. fisheries is at a critical juncture. In an effort to solve these problems, all eight Fishery Management Councils are developing plans to control access to the fisheries. Ultimately, we hope that market forces, rather than government edict, will bring the system into a more rational balance.

The Strategic Plan outlines a seven-step program to build sustainable fisheries. First, NOAA will expand and improve its assessments of fishery resources. We do not know, for example, the status of 34 percent of the species we are responsible for managing. Without more and better scientific information, NOAA is forced to make conservative fisheries management decisions to guard against accidental overfishing, potentially wasting immediate economic benefits. This also adds greatly to the controversial nature of fisheries management decisions. To meet this need for information, NOAA is committed to completing its

IT-95 and Marine Ecological Database Systems (MEDS). These national computer information systems will be located at nine major sites and collect fisheries-related data. They will include up-to-date stock information, combine new computer hardware and software, and provide on-line public access.

Second, NOAA intends to improve and advance its fishery predictions. These predictions are necessary to ensure the scientific basis to rebuild fisheries is available. To solve this problem, NOAA has embarked on a program to utilize state-of-the-art advanced sampling technologies, including hydroacoustics, laser technology, and optical sensors.

Third, NOAA will work with Fishery Management Councils to adopt policies to manage economic growth better and promote a healthy fishing industry. In fact, at this stage, most councils are setting the pace and it is our responsibility to follow their lead by implementing Fishery Management Plans which allow economic forces to determine who has access to fisheries. The industry, as we know, is not healthy as a result of overfishing, resource depletion, and overcapitalization. As the Plan says, "NOAA has no preconceived notion on how to assist the fishing industry during the transition" to a market-based fishery. Working directly with this Committee, we hope to develop a variety of tools to assist the industry. These tools include, among others, assuring safe, high-quality seafood; Saltonstall-

Kennedy grants to improve industry efficiency; and continued compensation for gear and vessel losses.

Fourth, we will ensure adequate compliance with federal laws and regulations. We believe that compliance can be improved significantly by increasing enforcement and legal personnel, stiffening penalties, increasing public awareness, and gaining industry support by evenhanded enforcement.

NOAA will continue to coordinate with the Department of Defense (DOD) to tap into so-called "dual use" technologies. One very promising area includes use of technology for an acoustic system that has the potential to enhance greatly NOAA's fisheries enforcement mission. Another promising area includes active collaboration with DOD on the use of emerging environmental sensing technologies.

A fifth element of the Build Sustainable Fisheries program would reduce the wasteful bycatch of non-target species. The inadvertent capture of juveniles and the "broodstock" of heavily exploited species can make restoration of such species difficult. An example in the Gulf of Mexico is the catch of juvenile red snapper in the shrimp trawl fishery. Additional economic losses are generated when fisheries are closed because of heavy "prohibited species" bycatch.

Conservation engineering is a major element of the 1990 amendments to the Magnuson Act underscored in the Strategic Plan. We must continue to improve devices to screen out protected and other non-target species from fishing gear, such as turtle and finfish excluder devices, develop gear to keep out Pacific halibut in the Alaskan trawl fisheries, and protect undersized swordfish taken on longlines.

The Plan's sixth element calls for the acceleration of the growth of United States marine aquaculture. Marine aquaculture has the potential to provide new sources of income and employment in rural areas, as demonstrated by the Atlantic salmon in eastern Maine. It can provide consumers a reliable alternate domestic supply without reducing the market for capture fisheries. Marine aquaculture may also help to restore depleted commercial fisheries by reducing fishing pressure on those stocks. The increased development of marine aquaculture can be conducted in harmony with the sensitive coastal zone. The Plan calls for the development of environmentally-acceptable, cost-effective commercial aquaculture systems.

Despite an earlier decision to de-emphasize aquaculture, the expertise and infrastructure still exists at NOAA. NOAA continues to help marine based aquaculture grow. Yet, we are falling behind the rest of the world as China, Taiwan, Ecuador, Norway, Canada, and France expand production of high-quality

shrimp, salmon, sea bass, and oysters through aquaculture and mariculture.

The Plan addresses several recommendations of the National Research Council (NRC), which recommended that NOAA be charged with the management and assessment of stock-enhanced marine fisheries, such as those in the Columbia and Sacramento River basins. The NRC also recommends that NOAA develop environmentally-safe technologies, methods and systems for culturing marine organisms.

Enhancement of stocks of marine finfish and shellfish can be an important management tool for our commercial and recreational fisheries and in the re-establishment of populations of endangered or threatened species. A high priority will be culturing of overexploited species and those in danger of overexploitation, using biotechnology and other scientific approaches.

A seventh area covered in the Plan calls for the promotion of global stewardship by fulfilling the Nation's commitments made at the Earth Summit. Some of these commitments focused on fisheries and conserving coastal resources. NOAA is prepared to work closely with the U.S. Agency for International Development, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the International Oceanographic Commission, and the World Bank in

providing the technical expertise to implement those recommendations.

Taken as a whole, we believe that application of NOAA-wide capabilities to address these seven points will lead to the restoration of a thriving domestic commercial and recreational fishing industry.

RECOVER PROTECTED SPECIES

Under the program, NOAA will promote the full recovery of depleted species and the maintenance of healthy marine ecosystems. Thirty marine species are listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered and two species of marine mammals -- the northern fur seal and Atlantic bottlenose dolphin -- are categorized as depleted under the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

There are 214 salmon runs considered at risk due to commercial exploitation and habitat degradation. There are continual conflicts between the need to implement effective recovery actions and legitimate commercial concerns. The development of a recovery plan for listed Snake River salmon brought into sharp focus the conflicting views of the hydroelectric industry, barge operators, farmers, fishermen, and conservationists.

In order to avoid such conflicts, NOAA must be proactive rather than reactive to each new crisis. We are fortunate because NOAA has assembled the largest known information database on populations of protected species, and has developed a stranding network, and a tissue bank program.

This new proactive position is already evident in our handling of sea turtles. We have expanded recovery efforts beyond the Southeast to include the mid-Atlantic and Pacific Basin areas. We have entered into agreements with Georgia, South Carolina and New York to protect sea turtles and we are in the process of negotiating agreements with Louisiana, North Carolina, Florida, and Virginia.

We are now conducting several status reviews per year as well as population assessments for other marine mammals stocks. We are moving aggressively to establish recovery plans, develop conservation plans, and convene workshops which bring all the affected parties together before a crisis occurs. For example, we are planning a workshop to develop a site-specific monitoring program to document marine mammal takes in Arctic oil and gas exploration operations.

The Strategic Plan proposes a four-point program to restore and maintain protected species:

First, we will work to reduce interactions between protected species and commercial fishing operations. New working models will be developed to resolve conflicts between exploiting fishing resources and conserving marine mammals and other protected species.

Second, we must improve our understanding of the status of all protected species and the impact of human activities on these stocks. Our efforts will focus first on those populations of protected species whose numbers have been pushed below statutorily-mandated management objectives. Improving our tracking and assessing the status and seasonal distribution of endangered whales is an example. Using traditional techniques and investigating the potential for new acoustic technology should provide new insights into the biology of these marine mammals, thus strengthening management decisions.

Third, the Plan calls for the aggressive implementation of recovery and conservation plans. By 1994, we hope to have approved recovery plans for 11 protected species. We will work closely with other Federal agencies, the States, foreign governments, and the private sector in implementing those recovery plans.

Fourth, NOAA will be taking a proactive approach to prevent listings. NMFS has initiated status reviews of species

potentially at risk of becoming extinct. NMFS will attempt to investigate the causes for species declines and will work with others to reverse those declines in order to protect species better before they need to be listed.

Finally, NOAA CoastWatch is presently being used in the mid-Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico by NMFS and coastal states to reduce the interactions between protected species and fishing operations.

COASTAL ECOSYSTEMS HEALTH

Maintaining biodiversity and long-term productivity is NOAA's vision for the Nation's coastal and marine habitats. To move toward this vision, the paradigm for managing coastal ecosystems must shift from a fragmented to an integrated process, from a site-specific to an ecosystem-wide context, and from a reactive to a preventive approach.

Today, over 54 percent of the United States population lives in the coastal zone, including the Great Lakes, which consists of only 10 percent of the total land mass of the United States. The latest 1990 Census data indicates that 133.3 million people are living in 672 counties bisecting coastal estuaries in the continental United States, Alaska and Hawaii.

Coastal recreation and tourism attract millions of visitors each year. Our commercial and recreational fishing industries are dependent on the health of coastal habitat. In some areas of the country, over 75 percent of total commercial landings and 80 to 90 percent of the recreational catch comes from species that are dependent on coastal habitats during some point of their life cycle. Seventeen million Americans use these waters for recreational fishing, generating \$18 billion annually in economic activity in equipment and tourist related sectors.

Yet those same activities and growth have significantly contributed to the degraded condition of coastal ecosystems, resulting in declines of fisheries stocks, increased mortality and morbidity of marine mammals, and reductions in the quality of life for coastal inhabitants through pollution or the spread water-borne bacteria.

The Plan proposes a five point program to improve the health of coastal ecosystems.

First, we plan to integrate coastal ecosystem management with other Federal and state agencies. By 2005, we hope to have 35 federally-approved state coastal management programs. We will be working with the States to strengthen their efforts in addressing cumulative effects on a watershed/receiving basin basis and on developing and implementing coastal nonpoint source

pollution control programs.

The Plan calls for adding essential support, technical staff and equipment for the National Marine Sanctuaries, National Estuarine Research Reserves, and for coastal habitat protection to implement the concept of ecosystem management. We are working with the Department of the Interior to identify and develop marine biodiversity research capabilities as the first step toward building a marine complement to the proposed National Biological Survey. NOAA also will strengthen its habitat protection program to allow more integrated ecosystem protection. This will be accomplished by increasing pre-project consultations and participation in the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing of all major hydropower facilities, among others actions.

The second element of the Coastal Ecosystem program calls for actions to better assess threats to the health and productivity of the Nation's coastal resources. Just two examples are:

--Watershed assessments to determine the effects of cumulative coastal development, toxics, habitat loss and nutrient over-enrichment; and

--Improved delivery of critical information on sensitive estuarine habitats for response to spills.

The Plan's third element proposes a joint NOAA/state effort to monitor changes in the health of coastal ecosystems. Building on the existing National Status and Trends Program, NOAA will enhance its monitoring effort by implementing the National Coastal Monitoring Act with the Environmental Protection Agency and the States.

Further, NOAA will continue its CoastWatch Change Analysis Program, monitoring the land cover habitats in the coastal region at least every five years. We will also establish a Biodiversity Information Clearinghouse and network.

A fourth element proposes to increase our understanding of the causes and significance of ecosystem changes. For example, ecosystem health studies are planned for selected regional watersheds to determine the cumulative effects of human-induced ecosystem stress, in order to provide improved scientific basis for management decisions in those areas.

We plan to develop the modelling capability to support ecosystem prediction and guide useful management actions; these advanced

coastal models will link high resolution physical models with chemical and biological productivity models.

We plan to provide more cost-effective monitoring techniques by developing new ground-based remote sensing capabilities, air borne sensors, and in situ sensors to increase temporal and spatial resolution of coastal observations. NOAA CoastWatch presently provides high resolution near-real time sea surface temperature and reflectance products supporting coastal ecological monitoring. These monitoring systems will provide data to support advanced coastal models, and will allow us to increase our reliance on in situ and remote sensing observing systems. For example, beginning next year a series of ocean color sensing satellites will provide data useful for evaluating coastal ocean productivity and water quality.

NOAA participated in the development of an Aquatic Nuisance Species Program which is designed to prevent the potential introduction and dispersal of aquatic nuisance species in U.S. waters through prevention, control, research and education efforts. The Program will address our responsibilities under the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990.

The final element of the Coastal Ecosystem Health Program proposes an education and outreach program to: (1) improve

public understanding of the value of coastal ecosystems; (2) transfer technology; and (3) develop training programs.

Taken together, these efforts to apply NOAA-wide capabilities, in partnership with academia and other governmental resource managers, will enhance our ability to manage and conserve marine species and ecosystems before they are damaged.

MODERNIZE NAVIGATION AND POSITIONING SERVICES

NOAA will meet the Nation's needs for the next decade's marine and aeronautical navigation systems that electronically integrate accurate chart data, global positioning system-based locations, and real-time environmental information. The Nation's commerce will move efficiently with minimal risk of accident. Databases supporting these navigation systems will provide managers, engineers, and scientists with basic layers of geographic information for the coastal zone at the touch of a keyboard.

A basic responsibility of NOAA, deeply rooted in its history and written into law, is "to provide charts and related information for the safe navigation of marine and air commerce; and to provide basic data for engineering and scientific purposes and for other commercial and industrial needs" (33 U.S.C. 883). Regulations require that NOAA charts be carried aboard all

vessels of 1,600 or more tons when operating in the navigable waters of the United States (33 C.F.R. 164).

These products and services are even more vital today than they have been in the past. Transportation, defense, science, public works, and recreation depend on these services. No other agency or organization in the country gathers these data or responds to these needs. But today, NOAA faces the prospect of being unable to discharge these responsibilities effectively for a number of reasons.

First, NOAA's charting products are becoming inadequate because of lack of maintenance. More than 99 percent of U.S. international commerce, valued at nearly \$500 billion, moves by ship. Half of this cargo is oil or hazardous material. These ships must move through U.S. coastal waters guided by charts that were created with data that in some cases is over 50 years old. Fully half of U.S. waters less than 30 meters deep (including 25 percent of our harbors and harbor approaches) were surveyed prior to World War II. Tidal current predictions for several ports have been withdrawn because their accuracy has deteriorated to a potentially dangerous state.

Second, new navigation and positioning technology has improved productivity thereby changing user requirements for these services. The new technology of digital chart data for use with

the rapidly-emerging electronic chart systems can help avoid accidents such as the recent EXXON VALDEZ disaster. Real-time water level and current data are needed for safe navigation. In the air, a new generation of navigation data sets will be required for the developing air traffic control Advanced Automation System and the new microwave or satellite-based instrument landing systems. On land, sea, and air the existing coordinate reference system must be renovated to provide the higher accuracy and different accessibility needed for space-based Global Positioning System.

Finally, there is an increasing demand for consistent, compatible data bases for engineering and scientific purposes. The annual national public expenditures for spatial data collection, maintenance, and manipulation are estimated to be about \$7 billion. Development of the needed geographic data is invariably the largest cost factor in the increasing use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). This investment has limited value if the data are not based on accurate, compatible coordinates. Convenient, quick, and inexpensive access to a unified, consistent reference framework -- the National Spatial Reference System -- is necessary. The fundamental layers of a coastal zone GIS, tied to this framework and derived from the NOAA charting data base, must be available to a broad and diverse user community.

The Strategic Plan describes a program to update nautical surveys, develop and distribute digital nautical information, and modernize marine forecasting. NOAA proposes to provide modern coverage of the Nation's most critical ports and harbor approaches. Charts will be digitized to allow for radar overlays to show other ships in the areas and information on real-time tide, current, and weather data. NOAA will complete installation of the National Water Level Observation Network to provide real-time tide and water levels.

Providing modern aeronautical charts is another important NOAA role. Airspace and airport capacity is projected to increase by 20 percent by 1999 and another 20 percent by 2005. The Federal Aviation Administration is investing an estimated \$20 billion in a 10-year modernization of the Nation's airspace to ensure safety and efficiency.

NOAA plans to fully support the FAA's requirements for digital data and products and for new products to support Global Positioning System-based navigation systems.

The Plan calls for improving accuracy and access to a unified reference coordinate system to serve the needs of modern space-based geodetic technique. NOAA plans to establish a network of 1,300 high accuracy, three dimensional stations, and with state,

local, and Federal partners eventually increase that number to 16,000 permanently-marked survey monuments.

The Plan devotes considerable attention to fleet modernization, a subject that I addressed recently before this Subcommittee. Because of the time spent discussing the topic at that hearing I will not go into more detail on the subject other than to let you know that NOAA's vision for 2005 is for a modern fleet to support NOAA missions.

INFRASTRUCTURE PORTFOLIO

The Plan devotes serious attention to the need for infrastructure improvements. Among these are bringing NOAA's 443 staffed facilities, when necessary, into environmental compliance. NOAA has more than 1,000 buildings at its facilities, including laboratories, office buildings, and forecast offices.

The Plan, of course, also devotes considerable attention to the "dry side" of NOAA's programs. These include environmental assessment and prediction such as advanced short-term warning and forecast services, implementing seasonal to interannual climate forecasts, assessing and predicting decadal-to-centennial changes. In addition, ocean color and surface winds from the Japanese satellite ADEOS will be made available in support of ocean science and operations. NOAA CoastWatch directly supports

intergovernmental cooperative coastal science and management by providing near real-time high resolution satellite data to federal, state and local resource managers and scientists.

Although NOAA presently supports R&D and operational activities that provide some level of understanding and forecast skill, an integrated system of high-resolution observational and modeling technologies to address coastal weather and ocean processes is lacking. One of the visions for 2005 is the development of a Coastal Forecast System which will provide environmental data and forecasts to meet NOAA's responsibilities for protection of life and property; stewardship of coastal resources; protection and restoration of environmental quality; and strengthening of U.S. coastal economies. Depending on resources, improvements in operational observations and predictions based on existing technologies can be introduced immediately to upgrade national capabilities, including expansion of the national buoy and automated coastal observing network and integration of meteorological and oceanographic measurement systems.

Through a continuing process of research and development the Coastal Forecast System will incorporate new technologies, providing greatly expanded and improved forecast services in a manner analogous to the National Weather Service modernization. As part of that modernization, 42 of the 116 Doppler weather surveillance radars being installed across the country will be

along the coast to help provide earlier and more effective severe weather warnings out to 100 miles offshore for ports and harbors.

Other topics include environmental technology, dual-use technology, environmental information, global partnership for fulfilling the goals of the earth summit, and environmental satellites.

In summary, the Strategic Plan covers all major NOAA activities. It is a living and evolving document which will chart our course into the third millennium. It reflects President Clinton's belief that there is no inherent conflict between economic growth, public safety and a sound environment. We welcome your comments and those of your constituents on how to improve the Plan.

That concludes my statement. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS FOR DIANA H. JOSEPHSON
BEFORE THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANOGRAPHY,
GULF OF MEXICO, AND THE OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF
COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
NOVEMBER 3, 1993

NOAA's Strategic Plan

Question 1: The plan is very ambitious and far reaching, but with the five-year spending cap, how does NOAA plan to fund the programs?

Answer: NOAA believes that the initiatives outlined in the strategic plan represent high priorities both within the Administration and Congress. NOAA estimates that the small investment required to accomplish our objectives can generate major economic benefits for the Nation of over \$11 billion per year.

For example, our Build Sustainable Fisheries initiative can generate an estimated \$2.9 billion annually in net revenues to the fishing industry. These revenues and the creation of a healthy, restructured fishing industry in turn will increase income and capital gains tax revenues. We are working with Congress to develop appropriate fishing fees that would help support the development of sustainable fisheries.

Also, NOAA is assessing the convergence of our Polar-Orbiting Environmental Satellite Program with that of the Department of Defense's Defense Meteorological Satellite Program and the NASA Earth Observing System Program. The three agencies have formed a tri-agency study committee to oversee the process and to approve final study products and recommendations. The converged operational program will cost the Nation less than the sum of the current independent programs.

Question 2: What happens if NOAA can't get a budget increase?

Answer: NOAA will make the most efficient use of existing resources, including refocusing resources as required. However, given the current level of funding and the requirements necessary to maintain a minimal level of essential services to the public (e.g., fisheries management and current weather forecasting services), NOAA would have little flexibility to implement the major objectives of the plan in the absence of sufficient resources.

Question 3: What process is NOAA going through to determine priorities within the plan?

Answer: I am very proud of the way NOAA has come together to develop the Strategic Plan. I plan on continuing this process as we evaluate our progress and determine priorities. We have established teams for each of the 15 Strategic Plan elements that have representatives from all the interested organizations within NOAA. These teams provide the intellectual foundation for determining the content of the elements. The information from these teams is iteratively presented to the leadership and senior management of NOAA. All decisions on program direction, priorities among elements, and funding options are made corporately by this senior management group. The process worked fairly well this past year and I plan on continuing the use of this type of corporate involvement.

Question 4: How far along is NOAA in implementing plans to use defense systems such as the IUSS and over the horizon radar to address specific missions?

Answer: Any implementation of NOAA's plans for using defense systems in support of our mission areas is dependent on: 1) decisions within the Navy and Air Force on whether to continue operating these systems; and 2) costs and benefits of utilizing the systems for non-defense purposes. Much of NOAA's work with the Integrated Undersea Sound Surveillance System (IUSS) and Over-the-Horizon (OTH-B) radar has been experimental so far, aimed at showing the feasibility of applying data from these systems to support NOAA's mission. For example, NOAA has been working with the Navy's hydrophone arrays/Sound Surveillance System (SOSUS) to detect underwater volcanic eruptions as part of our hydrothermal venting (VENTS) research. This summer, NOAA scientists were able to monitor, for the first time, an active eruption that was detected by the SOSUS.

Question 5: What happens if these systems are shut down?

Answer: Currently, the Navy intends to shut down a large part of the IUSS system, including much of the SOSUS array. The Navy will continue to operate a few SOSUS hydrophones and a reduced number of AGOR ships which support the Surveillance Towed Array Sensor System (SURTASS), concentrating on coastal waters. The final configuration of the IUSS is not known.

If the IUSS is shut down, potential benefits from its use would not be realized. These may include: whale studies, fish population studies, fisheries enforcement efforts, studies of hydrothermal venting (VENTS), ocean circulation studies, acoustic tomography, and tsunami warnings.

In many respects, the situation with the OTH-B radar is analogous to that of the IUSS. The OTH-B radar was designed as an early

warning system against incoming bombers. Now that the threat has been reduced, so has the justification for continuing to operate the system. Language in the FY 1994 Defense Appropriations Bill tasks the Air Force to continue to operate the east coast radar for 40 hours per week during FY 1994, and to cooperate with NOAA in our efforts to develop the use of the OTH-B for weather monitoring. The prognosis for the OTH-B radar is better than for the IUSS because the system is less complex and is cheaper to operate.

If the OTH-B radar is shut down, a potential capability to gather operational wind-field data over vast areas of data-sparse ocean will be lost. The wind data obtained from the OTH-B radar could be valuable because it could be obtained at synoptic weather observation times to supplement satellite and surface observation data used in weather predictions. Satellite data is not always available because of satellite location and cloud cover, and surface observations decrease just when they are needed most because ships avoid storms. The OTH-B radar could almost certainly improve weather forecasting on the west coast, where weather systems generally approach the coast from the data sparse Pacific Ocean.

Question 6: Is NOAA trying to change their budget structure to arrange it along the structure of the Strategic Plan?

Answer: Yes, NOAA is developing a new budget structure that reflects the Strategic Plan elements. We have presented this proposed budget structure to the Department of Commerce and the Office of Management and Budget.

Question 7: When does NOAA plan to present the new structure to Congress?

Answer: NOAA would like to begin presenting the new budget structure to congressional staff as soon as possible. We are working with staff to schedule briefings.

Question 8: I understand that NOAA has established a new Office of Sustainable Development. What responsibilities will this office have?

Answer: This office will provide advice and counsel to the Under Secretary on matters dealing with sustainable development, in particular where matters entail Federal/state/local government relationships, and with inter-governmental affairs. This office will also develop new partnerships among government, private industry, academic institutions, trade and professional associations, specialized users and environmental groups to

encourage positive relationships between economic growth and environmental protection.

Question 9: Is NOAA planning to create other new offices or get rid of any as part of the strategic review?

Answer: NOAA has created an Office of Policy and Strategic Planning to provide advice and counsel to the Under Secretary in achieving NOAA's goals through policy development, planning, and monitoring of appropriate agency policies. The Office will develop and evaluate, in coordination with Program Directors, policies, strategies, and long-range plans for new initiatives. Also, the office will conduct and coordinate research and program and economic evaluations to provide an analytical basis for identifying changing national needs in NOAA's mission areas.

Question 10: How are the Strategic Plan and the Fleet Modernization Plan linked?

ANSWER: NOAA's Strategic Plan identifies long-term goals and the general strategy to reach those goals. The Strategic Plan includes a long-term goal of a modern fleet of ships capable of meeting NOAA's program requirements.

The FRAM Plan builds on the strategic plan and provides specific actions directed toward meeting strategic goals.

The National Performance Review

Question 1: The National Performance Review contains a suggestion for the President to issue directives to establish ecosystem management policies across the government. How does NOAA plan to respond to this directive?

Answer: NOAA has adopted an Ecosystem Management Policy and has explicitly incorporated it into the NOAA Strategic Plan. The FY 1995 initiative includes the restructuring of NOAA programs to achieve integrated ecosystem management. We have also begun this process with other Federal agencies. We use this approach with EPA on nonpoint source pollution control and on environmental monitoring. We work closely with the Department of the Interior (DOI) on management issues relating to the South Florida ecosystem. NOAA's coastal management programs have always worked closely with state and local governments on ecosystem issues. Clearly NOAA is among the leaders in making coordinated ecosystem management policies a reality.

Question 2: During the hearing on modernization of the NOAA oceanographic fleet, we discussed opportunities that NOAA has for contracting hydrographic services from private sources. This was also one of the specific recommendations in the National Performance Review. Are there other services which NOAA is looking at for outside competition?

ANSWER: NOAA is continually looking at all labor intensive activities with the intention to provide these services in the most effective and efficient manner. At this time, there are no other specific services which have been identified for outside competition.

Question 3: Is NOAA involved with the Presidential Management Council's review of federal facilities for closing and consolidation? Can we expect NOAA to close or consolidate any of its research labs?

Answer: NOAA has not been involved with the Presidential Management Council's review of federal facilities. However, NOAA has a continuing review underway which addresses potential changes, including closures and consolidations, to NOAA's national network of fisheries laboratories. A report is due to Congress by January 1, 1994. In addition, NOAA is conducting a detailed review of its science activities, including facilities support, over the next year. The study will consider, among other factors, the current organizational configuration of the research facilities. NOAA currently is assessing the impact of recent appropriations on its operations, including NOAA's ability to continue to operate all of its research facilities.

NOAA is also participating in the NASA-chaired, multi-agency National Facilities Study as a developer and operator of satellite operational facilities. NOAA has participated in activities of the Study's Space Operations Task Group. NOAA operational satellite ground facilities are included in the Study's Facilities Inventory Database.

Question 4: The Performance Review gives general direction for agencies to look for opportunities for instituting user fees. Besides the user fees which are specifically called for to support fisheries management costs, is NOAA looking at other possibilities?

Answer: NOAA is participating on a working group to develop fish user fee proposals. In addition to fees to support NOAA's fisheries programs, NOAA is considering proposing the following other fees:

- Marine Sanctuary Concession Fees
- Services to Support Marine Navigation
- Aeronautical Chart Sales

GAO Facilities Report

Question 1: The General Accounting Office recently released a report on the need to repair and upgrade Federal research laboratories. NOAA was listed as having a repair backlog of \$38 million, with most maintenance and repair taking place on an emergency basis. What are NOAA's plans to address this problem?

Answer: NOAA established the Capital Improvements Program in 1991 as a means of providing for major repairs, renovations and alterations to its facilities. As a part of this, the performance of complete facility condition surveys by teams of engineers was initiated. The identification of \$38 million of projects is largely a result of these surveys.

Based on an established priority ranking system, NOAA annually performs the work required by these projects, to the extent possible based on the funding received for that fiscal year. It is NOAA's plan to continue to address the project backlog until it is eliminated, and all NOAA facilities have been brought up to the desired level of condition.

Additionally, a long-range repair and maintenance program is being developed to address future concerns and to keep NOAA's facilities in good repair.

Question 2: The report specifically identifies the sea turtle and shrimp lab in an old army barracks in Galveston, Texas, as being in very poor condition and not designed as science laboratories. Is NOAA planning to relocate this lab?

Answer: NOAA is developing a long-range plan for the repair and renovation of the Galveston laboratory complex. As proposed, design work will begin later this fiscal year and the total project will take approximately three years to complete, giving careful consideration not only to upgrading the facility but to energy conservation and historical significance as well. There are no plans to close this facility.

General

Question 1: Does NOAA have any views on length of reauthorization which should be enacted?

Answer: A three-year authorization would be the length of time which would be most useful to us.

Question 2: The Subcommittee is considering including a provision in the reauthorization which would extend the deadline for states without approved Coastal Zone Management Plans to submit non-point pollution control programs. This would allow states like Texas, which are currently trying to get into the program, the time they need to develop a plan without penalizing them for trying. Would NOAA support this provision?

Answer: Section 305 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) provides for two years of development funds to states to develop a coastal zone management program. After two years, if a state has not submitted an approvable program, funding is the state's responsibility to continue program development.

NOAA recognizes that two years is a very short amount of time to develop a coastal zone management program with all its necessary elements. NOAA would consider relief from this two-year limitation to allow the states, which have made substantial progress toward completing their coastal zone management programs, additional time to complete program development.

The concurrent development of a coastal nonpoint program presents a challenge to states developing coastal zone management programs. The fact that section 305 states are not authorized to receive section 6217 funds for the development of coastal nonpoint programs limits the ability of such states to produce both a coastal zone management program and a coastal nonpoint program within the limited time frame. NOAA looks forward to discussing with Congress ways of addressing the statutory problem creating this inequity.

Question 3: The NOAA authorization act calls for the establishment of a joint NOAA-EPA coastal monitoring program. What is the status of this program?

Answer: The NOAA authorization act for FY 1992 amended the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act of 1972 by adding a new title, Title V--National Coastal Monitoring Act. This amendment requires that the Under Secretary for NOAA and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency jointly develop and implement a comprehensive program for consistent monitoring of the Nation's coastal ecosystems and for assessing and monitoring high priority coastal waters to enhance the ability of Federal, state, and local authorities to carry out effective remedial programs for these waters.

This program is mandated to review and evaluate scientifically valid methods for monitoring environmental quality, to identify uniform indicators of coastal environmental quality, and to establish a coastal environmental monitoring information system.

As called for in the Act, NOAA is working with EPA to determine what the agencies can accomplish with current resources and the agencies are working to develop a comprehensive strategy identifying the activities required to implement a comprehensive coastal monitoring program. This strategy is being reviewed within NOAA and EPA and will be submitted to Congress following Administration review. In addition, NOAA is using this strategy to guide the implementation of its existing national coastal monitoring program, the National Status and Trends Program (NS&T), so that it meets, as much as possible, the goals of the Act. Initial planning is now being conducted to use the results from the NS&T Program, from EPA's Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program (EMAP), and from other NOAA, EPA, and DOI programs to develop a report to Congress to describe the condition of the Nation's coastal ecosystems as also called for under the Act.

Question 4: Rep. Unsoeld has introduced legislation to move NOAA's ocean and coastal programs to other agencies. What reasons can you give to justify keeping these programs within the Department of Commerce?

Answer: NOAA's oceanic and atmospheric missions are closely tied to the goals of economic growth and environmental protection emphasized by this Administration, and NOAA's location in the Department of Commerce fosters both goals. NOAA conducts objective and valued scientific research covering many areas, such as fisheries management, which underlie our policies concerning trade and the environment. NOAA's location within the Department allows its scientists to work more closely with other components of the Department to this end. In addition, separating the interrelated oceanic and atmospheric functions of NOAA could likely diminish the overall level of scientific research being conducted.

Transferring portions of NOAA from the Department could send a signal, albeit incorrect, that this Administration is not serious about the need for close coordination between our Nation's environmental and industrial communities. Housing NOAA within the Department of Commerce is an important reminder of the need for such coordination. In addition, the Unsoeld bill appears to divert resources from NOAA's scientific research to fund the administrative tasks inherent in an interdepartmental transfer that is not justified.

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