



## **CRS Report for Congress**

# **The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): FY2008 Budget and Congressional Appropriations**

Wayne A. Morrissey  
Information Research Specialist  
Knowledge Services Group

### **Summary**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the Department of Commerce is funded through revised continuing resolution (P.L. 110-5) for FY2007. For FY2008, President Bush requested \$3.81 billion in discretionary appropriations for NOAA. The Senate passed H.R. 3093, Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies Appropriations for FY2008 (amended) approving \$4.21 billion for NOAA for FY2008. The House-passed H.R. 3093 included \$3.95 billion for the agency. The President's budget prioritized satellite system launch requirements to ensure that critical meteorological and climate observations and data collection are not interrupted. The Secretary of Commerce announced that for FY2008, \$123 million was requested for ocean research and sustainable fisheries management in support of the President's 2004 *Ocean Action Plan*. Ocean advocates argue the amount is insufficient. NOAA has sought to have all of its programs and activities authorized under a single organic act. Congress and the Bush Administration differ on proposed authorities and agency flexibility. For FY2007, \$170 million in emergency appropriations was provided for NOAA to assist the agency in recovering from 2005 Hurricane Katrina losses.

### **The President's FY2008 Request**

The mission of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is to understand and predict changes in the Earth's environment and conserve and manage coastal and marine resources to meet the nation's economic, social, and environmental needs.<sup>1</sup> In terms of funding, NOAA is the largest agency of the Department of Commerce (DOC) and the FY2008 request would account for approximately 58% of DOC's discretionary budget request of \$6.6 billion.

---

<sup>1</sup> Department of Commerce, *NOAA FY2008 Budget Summary*, February 8, 2007, available at [[http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/%7Enbo/08bluebook\\_highlights.html](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/%7Enbo/08bluebook_highlights.html)].

For FY2008, the President requested \$3.81 billion in discretionary funds for NOAA (**Table 1**). Funding is proposed for NOAA under Title II of House and Senate Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations Acts for FY2008 (hereafter, CJS Approps.). **Table 1** compares FY2007 appropriations for NOAA to the President's FY2008 request, the Senate-passed H.R. 3093, and House-approved levels in H.R. 3093. Total budget authority (BA) is given for NOAA's Operations, Research, and Facilities (ORF) and Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction (PAC) accounts. NOAA BA is adjusted and net totals for NOAA's Other Accounts are added representing *total discretionary* appropriations. The FY2007 total reflects emergency appropriations.

**Table 1. NOAA FY2008 Request, FY2006-FY2007 Appropriations, and Congressional Action on the FY2008 Budget**  
(budget authority in millions of dollars)

NOAA Accounts	FY2007 Enacted	FY2008 Request <sup>a</sup>	Senate- Passed	House- Passed
<b>Operations, Research, and Facilities</b>				
National Ocean Service (NOS)	493.2	436.8	532.1	449.0
NOAA Fisheries (NMFS)	669.8	704.6	763.1	700.5
NOAA Research (OAR)	368.9	358.4	428.2	413.0
National Weather Service (NWS)	735.8	807.8	819.1	811.5
NOAA Satellites (NESDIS)	177.0	157.8	172.3	157.8
Program Support	351.8	389.5	407.0	407.8
ORF BA Total	2,796.5	2,854.9	3,121.8	2,939.6
Emergency Supplemental (P.L. 110-28)	170.4	NA	NA	NA
BA Offsets (PDAF/CZMF transfer/deobligations)	(55.4)	(88.0)	(84.9)	(91.0)
<b>Subtotal ORF Discretionary<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>2,886.5</b>	<b>2,766.9</b>	<b>3,036.9</b>	<b>2,848.6</b>
<b>Procurement, Acquisition, &amp; Construction</b>	<b>1,110.1</b>	<b>979.9</b>	<b>1,089.0</b>	<b>1,039.1</b>
<b>Other Accounts/PCSRF/CZMF/Finance</b>	<b>56.7</b>	<b>62.8</b>	<b>89.0</b>	<b>62.8</b>
<b>Total Discretionary Appropriations<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>\$4,053.3</b>	<b>\$3,809.6</b>	<b>\$4,214.9</b>	<b>\$3,950.5</b>

**Sources:** H.Rept. 110-240 on H.R. 3093 (July 12, 2007) and S.Rept. 110-124 on S. 1745 (June 29, 2007).

a. NOAA, *FY2008 Budget Summary*, February 8, 2007 (line office budget request details figures), available at [[http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/%7Enbo/07bluebook\\_highlights.html](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/%7Enbo/07bluebook_highlights.html)].

b. Figure does not include NOAA rescission of \$25 million.

c. Figures subject to change pending revised funding data.

The President also requested \$79 million in offsetting budget authority for NOAA from a U.S. Department of Agriculture fund to develop American fishery products, almost \$12 million more than authorized for FY2006. NOAA currently operates under the *Revised Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2007* (P.L. 110-5, hereafter, CR) that instructed how funding was allocated by Congress to most federal agencies for FY2007;

however, some FY2006 funding was not approved.<sup>2</sup> The CR included a rescission of \$25 million for NOAA from unobligated FY2006 funds.

**Summary of the FY2008 Request.** NOAA's Administrator, Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr. (Ret. Navy), stated that NOAA's FY2008 request of \$3.81 billion represented a "national consensus" of requirements to fund ongoing activities at the agency.<sup>3</sup> That amount is \$130 million, or 3.3%, less than the \$3.95 billion appropriated for NOAA in FY2006 and \$100 million, or 2.6%, less than FY2007 appropriations. The FY2008 budget also proposed \$30.2 million in savings in FY2007 appropriations that were either "unrequested" by the Administration or "performing poorly."<sup>4</sup> The President requested \$2.77 billion for NOAA's ORF account and \$980 million for the PAC account. For NOAA's "Other Accounts," a net \$62.8 million was requested, including \$66.8 million for the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) and \$3 million for the Coastal Zone Management Fund (CZMF). ORF BA would be offset by a transfer of \$66.1 million from the Promote and Develop American Fishery Products Fund (PDAF). During deliberation on the FY2008 budget, Congress has considered the following.

- Criticism by international ocean advocacy groups that FY2008 funding requested for the Joint Oceans Commission Initiative (JOCI) to prevent over fishing and to alleviate ocean pollution is inadequate. NOAA would reprogram \$123 million to implement the President's 2004 *Ocean Action Plan*. Some argue that an earnest response would be about \$750 million.
- A possible organic act to authorize all of NOAA's functions, authorities, and programs under a single law is being urged by the Administration. The House Science Committee reported H.R. 5450 in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress (H.Rept. 109-545), differing with Bush Administration proposals for agency flexibility and budget autonomy.<sup>5</sup>
- Chronic problems with NOAA's satellite programs (e.g., launch schedule slippages and contractor performance) have required an extensive review to merit "Nunn-McCurdy" certification. This has included an overhaul of systems architecture and payloads to ensure future continuity of global weather and environmental observations. Congress has held hearings on the agency's progress in getting its satellite programs back on track.

---

<sup>2</sup> See P.L. 110-5, February 15, 2007, special instructions were included for §208-209 of P.L. 109-108 (FY2006 CJS Approps.).

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce, NOAA, "2008 President's Budget Rollout," presentation of Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., U.S. Navy (Ret.), Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, February 8, 2007. The slide presentation is available at [[http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/%7Enbo/FY08%20Rollout%20Materials/1\\_31\\_07\\_ROLLOUT/VADM\\_Presentation/FY08\\_VADM\\_Constituents%20Brief\\_FINAL\\_2\\_7\\_07.pdf](http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/%7Enbo/FY08%20Rollout%20Materials/1_31_07_ROLLOUT/VADM_Presentation/FY08_VADM_Constituents%20Brief_FINAL_2_7_07.pdf)].

<sup>4</sup> See for example performance ratings for NOAA's "National Marine Fisheries Service," at [<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/summary/10000036.2002.html>].

<sup>5</sup> NOAA was created in the Department of Commerce by President Nixon with Reorganization Plan No. 4 in 1970. The plan consolidated programs from different agencies across the federal government; however, those programs have maintained their respective authorizing laws.

**NOAA Budget Priorities for FY2008.** During briefings in Washington, DC, Administrator Lautenbacher discussed NOAA’s FY2008 budget priorities and indicated that a total of \$51.5 million in budget adjustments would be required to cover salaries, personnel expenses, and other “core mission” requirements for FY2008. This includes the President’s proposed pay increase of 3% for NOAA employees. The Administrator also noted that \$1.7 million would pay for differential to cover the expenses of rotating NOAA maritime crews more frequently. He indicated that (NOAA Corps officer) billets filled since FY2004 would help make this possible.

**Table 2. NOAA Program Support Funding Detailed**  
(\$ in millions)

NOAA Program Support <sup>a</sup>		FY2007 Enacted	FY2008 Request	Senate- Passed	House- Passed
<b>Corporate Services (CS)<sup>a</sup></b>		<b>176.6</b>	<b>195.6</b>	<b>207.4</b>	<b>195.6</b>
<b>Educational Programs (Ed)</b>		<b>37.5</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>42.4</b>	<b>37.7</b>
<b>Marine &amp; Aviation Operations (OMAO)</b>					
<i>ORF</i>	Marine Services	95.5	112.6	131.5	112.6
	Fleet Planning & Maintenance	15.0	17.2	NA	17.2
	Aviation Operations	20.9	25.8	25.8	25.8
	Officers Health Care Benefits	2.0	NA	NA	NA
<i>PAC</i>	Fleet Replace/Acquisition	58.7	4.4	9.4	4.5
	Aircraft Replacement	4.0	NA	NA	NA
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>196.1</b>	<b>160.0</b>	<b>166.7</b>	<b>160.1</b>
<b>Facilities (FAC)</b>					
<i>ORF</i>	Environmental Compliance	2.4	4.1	NA	4.1
	Maintenance./Construction/Safety	8.5	14.8	NA	14.8
<i>PAC</i>	Construction	46.4	23.3	23.3	23.3
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>57.3</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>23.3</b>	<b>42.2</b>
<b>Integrated Ocean Observation System<sup>f</sup></b>		17.7	NA	NA	NA
<b>Total PS ORF</b>		<b>358.4</b>	<b>389.5</b>	<b>407.0</b>	<b>407.8</b>
<b>Total PS PAC</b>		<b>126.8</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>27.8</b>
<b>Grand Total Program Support</b>		<b>\$485.2</b>	<b>\$417.2</b>	<b>\$439.7</b>	<b>\$435.6</b>

**Source:** Compiled by CRS from H.Rept. 110-240 (July 12, 2007); S.Rept. 110-124 on S. 1745 (June 29, 2007).

- a. Funding for Corporate Services (CS) includes the Offices of the Under Secretary for Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere (USAO) and the division of Policy Formulation and Development (PFD), under ORF.
- b. In FY2006 Appropriations a PS-PAC budget subactivity was created to fund development of an Integrated Ocean Observation System (IOOS) that funding level was carried over to FY2007 (P.L. 110-5). For FY2008, funding for IOOS is requested in the NOS ORF & PAC budget.

**Satellites.** For FY2008, the President reduced NOAA’s GOES-R geostationary satellite budget by \$80.3 million. Together with a reduction of \$26.8 million from NOAA’s Polar Orbiting Satellite Program, budget funds would be reprogrammed to prioritize the launch of the last of the POES-polar orbiting series of satellites, POES-N

Prime (N'), in 2009. Until then, a U.S. agreement with the European Union MetOp satellite program would help to ensure uninterrupted critical meteorological observations.

Three GOES geostationary satellites are now in orbit above the Earth. Two of these were poised over the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans for the 2007 hurricane season. A third, GOES-13, is deployed over the Southern Hemisphere. NOAA asserts that redundancy in the GOES program has reduced somewhat the necessity to develop as expediently the GOES-R series of geostationary satellites; however, Congress has directed NOAA to move forward with development, including advanced instrument development and tests.

The National Polar Orbiting Environmental Satellite System (NPOESS), the successor to the POES program, is reported to be on track after a "Nunn-McCurdy"-required certification prompted a system redesign. NOAA is gearing up for the NPOESS Preparatory Project (NPP) whose NPP satellite would be launched at the end of 2009 to test sensors and ground components required for future meteorological data collection, management, and analysis. The launch of the first NPOESS satellite is planned for 2013. There has been contention over the future siting of the Command and Data Acquisition Station for NPOESS in Svalbard, Norway.

**Ocean Activities.** For FY2008, the President requested \$14 million for the NOAA International Ocean Observation System (IOOS). The IOOS budget would make grants available for developing regional networks of ocean remote sensors, including biological sensors, to monitor the general health of the ocean. The President requested \$15 million for the Coastal, Estuarine, Land Conservation and Acquisition Program (CELCP) initiated by Congress in FY2003 to preserve U.S. coastal natural resources and to protect marine ecosystems. Funding of \$123 million was requested for U.S. ocean research, fisheries management, and marine conservation in response to the President's *Ocean Action* plan. As part of that funding, \$17.5 million would help to implement fisheries management and science required by the 2006 Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Reauthorization Act. Another \$8 million was requested as part of NOAA's ongoing ocean exploration for mapping the extended continental shelf in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone and for identifying potential marine resources there. Also, \$20.3 million would be provided to renovate the Pacific Region Center facilities near Honolulu, HI.

**Weather.** Excluding weather and environmental satellite continuity priorities, NOAA requested \$5.5 million to operate and maintain a third WP-3 Orion "hurricane hunter." The aircraft was funded from post-Katrina emergency appropriations (P.L. 109-234). That same funding source enabled the NOAA's National Weather Service to deploy a total of 15 hurricane monitoring buoys in the Western Atlantic Basin for detection and characterization of tropical storms. The President also requested amounts necessary to deploy 19 remaining tsunami detection (DART) buoys in Pacific waters.

**Conference Actions.** On October 16, the Senate insisted on its amendments and appointed conferees on H.R. 3093, CJS Appropriations for FY2008.

**Senate Appropriations.** On October 16, 2007, the Senate passed H.R. 3093 (amended) and approved a total of \$4.21 billion for NOAA, which is \$162 million more

than FY2007 appropriation of \$4.05 billion,<sup>6</sup> and \$405 million more than the President's request for FY2008 of \$3.81 billion. This total included \$3.04 billion for NOAA's ORF account, almost \$1.09 billion for the PAC account, and a net total of \$89 million for Other Accounts (**Table 1**). The Senate approved \$795 million for Joint Ocean Commission Initiative's recommendations for "greater stewardship of our Oceans." Amendments by the Senate reprogrammed NOAA funding, but did not change final totals.

The Senate Appropriations Committee recommended funding increases for NOAA's satellite programs foremost to restore funding for future deployment of critical climate change observation sensors for which no funding was requested for FY2008. The committee also prioritized support for development and preservation of climate data and information. New funding of \$175 million was recommended for grants for "open competitive" climate research, including drought research. Including similar grants established across the agency, about \$425 million was recommended. The committee recommended funding to renovate the Pacific Regional Center and consolidate NOAA programs at a single facility near Honolulu, HI. Also, a Disaster Response Center was recommended for the Gulf of Mexico for responding to severe weather events. It also recommended elevating the NOS Coastal Services Center to budget subactivity status and would support a federal (coastal) Disaster Resilient Communities initiative.

**House Appropriations.** On July 12, 2007, the House passed H.R. 3093 approving a total of \$3.95 billion for NOAA (**Table 1**). The House bill is \$140 million, or 3.7%, more than the FY2008 request and \$102.8 million, or 2.5%, less than the FY2007 funding level (including supplemental appropriations of \$107 million). It is \$264.2 million, or almost 7%, less than the Senate Appropriation Committee recommendation of \$4.21 billion. Total appropriations included \$2.85 billion for ORF, almost \$1.04 billion for PAC, and a net \$63.3 million for NOAA's Other Accounts. Also, \$77 million in offsetting budget authority would be transferred to NOAA's PDAF. Another \$11 million in BA would be derived from FY2007 deobligated funds.

The House bill included \$6 million for a study by the National Academy of Sciences, for NOAA, to establish a Climate Change Study Committee. It included an increase of \$23 million for NOAA Satellite Services to restore sensors critical to future satellite missions that would ensure continued climate change observations and data acquisition. Funding was approved for near coastal and outer continental shelf hydrographic surveys, and expediting electronic chart conversion. The Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund would receive \$64.8 million, and be apportioned to Pacific Northwest states. NOAA was required to report on the status and inventory of U.S. ocean observation capabilities. Education and outreach funding was increased by \$18.3 million, nearly 100% more than the President's request, including \$5 million for new competitive education grants. Climate research funding included \$172 million for competitive research grants. A total of \$63 million was approved for NOAA's Coastal Estuarine Land Conservation Program (CELCP) and for marine sanctuaries construction and land acquisition under NOS/PAC. This is approximately \$36 million more than the FY2008 request.

---

<sup>6</sup> Includes enacted rescission of \$25 million.