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# National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) FY2026 Budget Request and Appropriations

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is an agency in the Department of Commerce. NOAA's mission, as defined by the agency, is to understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans, and coasts; to share that information; and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources. In March 2025, Congress passed and the President signed into law a full-year continuing resolution of discretionary appropriations for NOAA for the remainder of FY2025 (P.L. 119-4). For FY2026, the Administration is requesting a decrease in funding for NOAA broadly, with proposals to eliminate funding for climate-related offices and programs, among other changes.

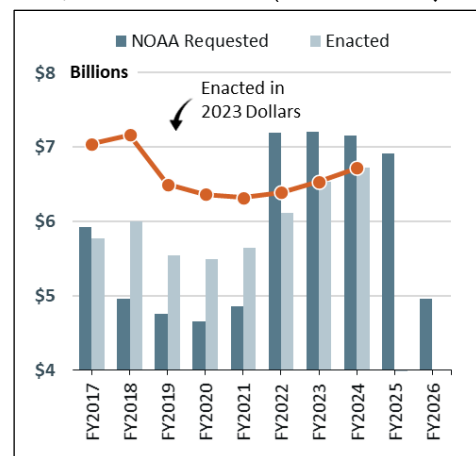
NOAA's work is divided among six line offices: National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS); National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); National Ocean Service (NOS); National Weather Service (NWS); Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR); and Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO). NOAA's Mission Support provides planning, leadership, finances, information technology, educational programming, and other support across the line offices.

Congress typically provides NOAA with annual mandatory and discretionary appropriations. Mandatory appropriations, which generally comprise a small percentage of total NOAA funding, are disbursed to various accounts that support programs in NOS, NMFS, and OMAO. NOAA's discretionary appropriations typically are included in annual Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations laws. Discretionary appropriations support two broad accounts—Operations, Research, and Facilities (ORF) and Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction (PAC)—and a few smaller accounts. Annual appropriations are one part of the agency's discretionary *direct obligations* or funding level, which also include transfers and recoveries from prior year obligations. For more about NOAA's budget structure, see CRS Report R48157, *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Budget and Funding: Overview and Issues for Congress*.

## Agency Funding

NOAA has requested between \$4.7 billion and \$7.2 billion in nominal dollars per year in discretionary direct obligations for ORF and PAC from FY2017 to FY2026 (**Figure 1**). Congress provided between \$5.5 billion and \$6.7 billion in nominal dollars for discretionary direct obligations from FY2017 through FY2024. Congress did not provide a direct obligations amount in law for FY2025. The enacted OAR and PAC direct obligations were above \$7 billion in FY2017 and FY2018 and lower since then, when adjusted for inflation (see orange line in **Figure 1**).

**Figure 1. ORF and PAC Annual Discretionary Direct Obligations, FY2017-FY2026** (nominal and adjusted \$s)



**Sources:** CRS, from NOAA budget justifications, congressional explanatory statements, and *Budget FY2025, Table 10.1, Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940-2029*.

**Notes:** See text for abbreviations. Congress did not specify an enacted direct obligations amount for FY2025. Discretionary direct obligations, or funding levels, include annual appropriations, transfers, and recoveries from prior year obligations but exclude any additional appropriations.

## FY2025 Enacted Appropriations

In March 2025, Congress provided the agency a total of \$6.1 billion in appropriations as part of P.L. 119-4 (Congress did not specify a direct obligations amount). The law required NOAA to submit a spending plan to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations. NESDIS, NMFS, NOS, and OAR reportedly will spend less than what Congress approved for FY2025 (the FY2025 spending plan was not publicly available).

Congress previously provided NOAA with additional appropriations, through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA; P.L. 117-58) and the 2022 budget reconciliation measure (sometimes referred to as the Inflation Reduction Act [IRA]; P.L. 117-169), to be made available to the agency in FY2025 and FY2026. In January 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order 14154, "Unleashing American Energy," which "pause[d]" the disbursement of IIJA- and IRA-appropriated funds. In July 2025, the FY2025 reconciliation act (P.L. 119-21) rescinded unobligated balances of amounts appropriated or otherwise made available to NOAA by the IRA for coastal communities and climate resilience, NOAA and national marine sanctuaries facilities, efficient and effective reviews, and oceanic and atmospheric research and forecasting for weather and climate.

### FY2026 Administration Budget Request

The Administration requested nearly \$5 billion for discretionary direct obligations for ORF and PAC in FY2026 (**Figure 1**). Of that, the Administration requested \$4.5 billion in appropriations (a component of discretionary direct obligations). The requested appropriations amount is \$1.6 billion below the FY2025 enacted appropriations amount (\$6.1 billion) estimated in the Office of Management and Budget's *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget* (hereinafter referred to as estimated FY2025).

The Administration also proposed to eliminate OAR and to terminate its ORF and PAC funding, which would entail transferring some OAR activities to NWS (e.g., U.S. Weather Research Program, Tornado Severe Storm Research/Phased Array Radar) and NOS (e.g., Ocean Exploration and Research). Other OAR funding—including for climate-related programs—would be eliminated. Accounting for the potential transfer of OAR activities, the Administration requested a 7% increase for NWS and a 33% decrease for NOS from estimated FY2025 funding levels. The Administration also requested funding decreases for NESDIS (including reduced instrumentation and number of launches for the Geostationary Extended Observations satellite program), NMFS, OMAO, and Mission Support compared with estimated FY2025 funding levels (**Figure 2**).

### FY2026 Congressional Appropriations Proposals

In July 2025, the House Subcommittee on CJS of the Appropriations Committee considered bill text and an accompanying report (hereinafter referred to as House subcommittee mark) and the Senate Appropriations Committee reported bill language (S.Rept. 119-44, accompanying S. 2354) for CJS for FY2026. The House subcommittee mark and Senate committee-reported bills would preserve NOAA's structure, maintaining funding for all line offices. In particular, S.Rept. 119-44 states, "While the committee could be open to realigning some programs to enhance operational outcomes, the absence of detailed plans hinders informed decision-making."

Both the House subcommittee mark and the Senate committee-reported bills would provide increased funding levels for NESDIS, NOS, OAR, OMAO, and Mission Support relative to the Administration's FY2026 request. In addition, both bills would provide slight increases in funding for NOS and OAR over the estimated FY2025 funding levels (**Figure 2**). In particular, S.Rept. 119-44 "strongly supports Climate Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes," and both bills would provide funding support for regional climate centers.

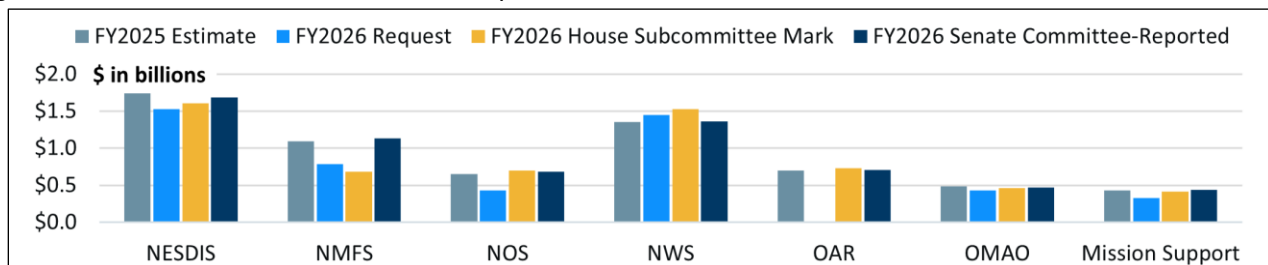
The FY2026 House and Senate proposals diverge for NMFS and NWS. The House subcommittee mark would provide a 37% decrease to the NMFS, whereas the Senate committee-reported bill would provide a 3% increase compared with estimated FY2025 funding levels. The House subcommittee draft would provide a 13% increase to NWS over estimated FY2025 funding levels; the Senate bill would provide an increase of \$6.9 million (1%) (**Figure 2**). House and Senate documents expressed concerns regarding NWS staffing shortages, particularly at local Weather Forecast Offices, and would direct NOAA to provide a report about its plans to address NWS staffing concerns.

### Issues for Congress

The FY2026 budget request emphasizes a "leaner NOAA that focuses on core operational needs, eliminates unnecessary layers of bureaucracy, terminates nonessential grant programs, and ends activities that do not warrant a [f]ederal role." Given the Administration's objective for a leaner NOAA, Congress could choose to define NOAA's structure and functions, including through an organic act for the agency. For more information, see CRS Report R47636, *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): Organization Overview and Issues for Congress*. Members also may consider broader questions related to the possible consequences of the Administration's actions to reduce NOAA's staffing, or how proposed transfer of functions within the agency or to other federal departments may impact NOAA's implementation of its statutory authorities and responsibilities.

**Figure 2. NOAA Annual ORF and PAC Discretionary Funding by Line Offices, FY2025-FY2026 (nominal \$s)**

Figure is interactive in the HTML version of this report.



**Sources:** CRS. "FY2025 Estimate" figures from Office of Management and Budget, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget*, May 2025; "FY2026 Request" totals from NOAA, *Budget Estimates, Fiscal Year 2026*; "FY2026 Senate Committee-Reported" totals from S.Rept. 119-44, accompanying S. 2354; and "FY2026 House Subcommittee Mark" totals from the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies of the Appropriations Committee bill text and accompanying report.

**Notes:** See text for abbreviations. NOAA line office amounts as provided in the listed sources.

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