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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 stated mission 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. This CRS In Focus describes NOAA, its budget structure, and its FY2026 budget request and enacted funding levels.

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 *direct obligations* or total funding levels, which include annual appropriations, transfers, and recoveries from prior-year obligations. Mandatory appropriations, which generally comprise a small percentage of total NOAA funding, are disbursed to various accounts that support programs in OMAO, NMFS, and NOS. NOAA’s discretionary appropriations typically are included in annual Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations laws. Discretionary direct obligations, which include discretionary appropriations, support two broad accounts—Operations, Research, and Facilities (ORF) and Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction (PAC)—and a few smaller accounts. 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 over Time

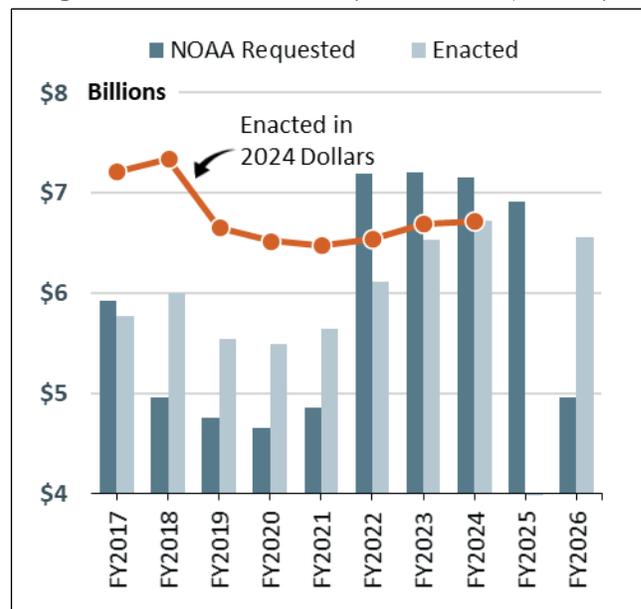
NOAA requested between \$4.7 billion and \$7.2 billion in nominal dollars per fiscal year in annual discretionary direct obligations for ORF and PAC from FY2017 to FY2026 (Figure 1). Congress provided between \$5.5 billion and \$6.7 billion in nominal dollars for annual discretionary direct obligations from FY2017 through FY2026. In inflation-adjusted (2024) dollars, the enacted ORF and PAC discretionary direct obligations were above \$7 billion in FY2017 and FY2018 and have been lower since (see orange line in Figure 1).

Additional Funding

Congress previously provided NOAA with additional appropriations through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA; P.L. 117-58) and P.L. 117-169 (sometimes

referred to as the Inflation Reduction Act [IRA]) to be made available to the agency in 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, Congress rescinded unobligated balances of amounts appropriated or otherwise made available to NOAA by the IRA via P.L. 119-21.

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 *Historical Tables, Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2026, Table 10.1, Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940-2024*.

Notes: See text for abbreviations. Congress did not specify a discretionary direct obligations amount for FY2025. Discretionary direct obligations include annual appropriations, transfers, and recoveries from prior-year obligations but exclude any additional or supplemental appropriations.

FY2026 Budget Request and Enacted Funding

The Administration’s FY2026 request emphasized 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.” The request proposed nearly \$5.0 billion for discretionary direct obligations (including \$4.5 billion in appropriations) for ORF and PAC in FY2026 (Figure 1).

Congress passed a continuing resolution in November 2025 (P.L. 119-37) and full-year FY2026 appropriations (P.L. 119-74), with an accompanying explanatory statement, in January 2026. P.L. 119-74 provides \$6.6 billion in discretionary direct obligations for ORF and PAC (**Figure 1**). The total includes \$6.1 billion in appropriations for NOAA, of which \$507.0 million is from unobligated appropriations from IJA for the year (as directed in P.L. 119-74, §544). The total enacted appropriations amount is \$1.6 billion more than the requested amount for FY2026.

Office-Level Funding Changes

For FY2026, the Administration requested less funding for all line offices (except NWS) and Mission Support relative to the amount each was estimated to receive for FY2025 (as noted in the Office of Management and Budget’s *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget*; hereinafter referred to as FY2025 estimate; see **Figure 2**, below). Congress did not specify enacted amounts at the line-office level for FY2025). FY2026 enacted funding was greater than the FY2026 request for all line offices and Mission Support, and it provided higher amounts for NMFS, NOS, and NWS relative to FY2025 estimates. Congress made the greatest changes to NWS and OAR for FY2026 relative to FY2025 estimates, increasing the amount NWS received by 8% and decreasing the amount OAR received by nearly 10%.

Alterations to OAR

The Administration proposed to eliminate OAR and terminate its ORF and PAC funding for FY2026. Under the proposal, some OAR programs would have transferred to NWS and NOS, which would allow the programs to “carry out research that is more directly related to the NOAA mission.” Other OAR funding—including for climate-related programs—would have been eliminated. In the FY2026 appropriations law, Congress retained OAR and its funding while transferring a subset of OAR programs to NWS, as requested by the Administration.

Selected NESDIS Program Adjustments

The Administration proposed to decrease or terminate funding for certain programs within NESDIS for FY2026

relative to FY2024 enacted amounts (FY2025 program-level estimates or enacted amounts have not been made public). For FY2026, Congress provided some funding consistent with the Administration’s proposal, such as planned decreases for the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites R Series and Space Weather Follow On program; decreases to Space Weather Next; and increases to the Near Earth Orbit Network. The Administration proposed to restructure the Geostationary Extended Observations (GeoXO) program into a “focused, core weather mission”; Congress directed NOAA to include “advanced imaging and atmospheric sounding capabilities” as originally planned.

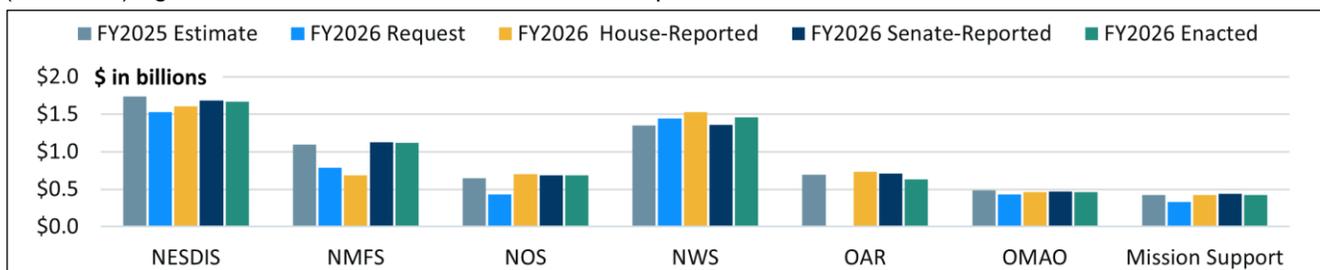
Other Considerations

In 2025, the Administration reduced NOAA staffing through various means as part of efforts to increase government efficiency. The impacts of staff reductions on NOAA’s ability to fulfill its authorities remain unclear. The Administration proposed to eliminate 2,456 positions in FY2026. For FY2026, Congress expressed concern that “staffing losses will affect the agency’s ability to fulfill its statutory responsibilities” and encouraged NOAA to address mission-critical vacancies (S.Rept. 119-44 incorporated by reference into the explanatory statement accompanying P.L. 119-74). It also directed NWS to “maintain staffing levels” to protect life and property to the maximum extent possible (P.L. 119-74, §114).

Additionally, the impact of the Administration’s disbursement pause and congressional rescission of IRA funding on NOAA and its grant recipients remains to be determined. CRS did not identify a comprehensive source describing specific funding or projects paused or rescinded. Prior to the rescission, the Congressional Budget Office estimated NOAA’s portion of the rescission would total \$384 million. Congress may consider conducting oversight on the effects of the pause and rescission and could direct NOAA to make information on the effects publicly available.

Figure 2. NOAA Annual ORF and PAC Discretionary Direct Obligations by Line Office, FY2025-FY2026

(nominal \$) Figure is interactive in the HTML version of this report.



Source: CRS, using Office of Management and Budget, Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget, May 2025; NOAA, Budget Estimates, Fiscal Year 2026; S.Rept. 119-44; H.Rept. 119-272; and P.L. 119-74 and accompanying explanatory statement.

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

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