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IN FOCUS

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) FY2027 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, ocean, and coasts; to share that information; and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources. This In Focus describes NOAA, its budget structure, its enacted funding, and its FY2027 budget request.

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 NMFS, NOS, and OMAO. 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

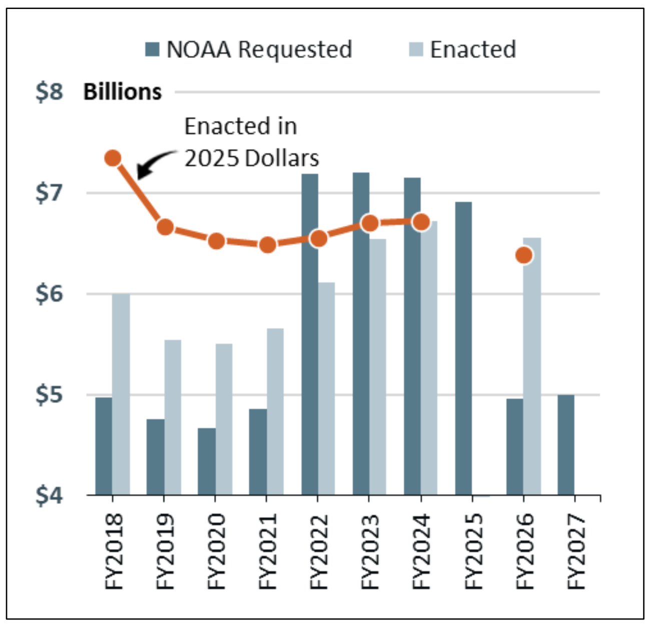
NOAA requested between $4.8 billion and $7.2 billion (nominal dollars) in discretionary direct obligations for ORF and PAC each year from FY2018 to FY2027 (**Figure 1**). During that time, Congress provided between $5.5 billion and $6.7 billion (nominal dollars) for annual discretionary direct obligations for ORF and PAC, with the highest inflation-adjusted (2025 dollars) amount in FY2018 (see orange line in **Figure 1**). Additional funding available to NOAA 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), not included in the annual amounts, ends in FY2026.

FY2027 Budget Request and Proposed Funding

The Administration's FY2027 NOAA budget request aimed to "unleash American energy, leverage innovation in the weather and space enterprises, and enable and promote economic growth." The request proposed nearly $5.0 billion for discretionary direct obligations (including $4.5 billion in appropriations) for ORF and PAC in FY2027 (**Figure 1**). The House committee-approved bill and accompanying report (H.Rept. 119-652) for FY2027 would provide NOAA with nearly $6.5 billion for discretionary direct obligations (including $5.8 billion in appropriations) for ORF and PAC, about 1% less than the FY2026 enacted amount. No CJS appropriations bill has been introduced in the Senate at this date.

Figure 1. Operations, Research, and Facilities (ORF) and Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction (PAC) Annual Discretionary Direct Obligations, FY2018-FY2027

(nominal and adjusted $s)



Sources: CRS, from NOAA budget justifications, congressional explanatory statements, and *Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2027, Table 10.1, Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940-2031*.

Notes: See text for definitions. Congress did not specify a discretionary direct obligations amount for FY2025.

Line Office-Level Funding Changes

For FY2027, the Administration requested less funding for most line offices (except for NWS and OMAO) and Mission Support relative to their FY2026 enacted amounts (**Figure 2**). NOAA made similar requests in FY2026; Congress provided greater funding than the FY2026 request for all line offices and Mission Support. The House appropriations committee-approved report (House report; H.Rept. 119-652) accompanying the FY2027 House CJS bill detailed greater funding for most line offices (except for

OMAO) compared with the FY2027 request, but would provide less than the FY2026 enacted amount for NMFS, OAR, and Mission Support.

Modifications to OAR

According to NOAA, OAR plans, manages, and conducts research and development to meet NOAA's needs. The Administration again proposed to eliminate OAR and terminate its ORF and PAC funding for FY2027 to "streamline program management, align research closer to operations, and focus on NOAA's public safety mission." Under the proposal, some OAR programs would transfer to NWS and NOS to "carry out science that is more directly related to the NOAA mission." Other OAR funding—including for climate research and data, laboratories and cooperative institutes (CIs), and the National Sea Grant program—would be eliminated. In FY2026, Congress transferred some OAR programs to NWS as requested and retained OAR and its funding. The House report language would retain OAR, along with its current programs, and provide 2% less funding than the FY2026 enacted amount (**Figure 2**). The House report language also would direct NOAA to maintain and avoid the closure, consolidation, or elimination of OAR laboratories and CIs. Dissenting views in the report opposed decreased funding compared to FY2026 enacted amounts for OAR's climate laboratories and CIs, and the Competitive Climate Research program.

Modifications to NOS

NOS provides services and products related to the nation's ocean and coastal use, management, commerce, and operations, among other activities. For FY2027, the Administration proposed to transfer several programs related to ocean exploration, observations, and ocean acidification from OAR to NOS. The FY2027 budget request would either decrease or terminate funding for NOS grants and programs and provide 52% less than the FY2026 enacted amount in total (**Figure 2**). Funding would be reduced for navigation, observations, hydrographic surveys, ocean exploration, coastal zone management services, and marine sanctuaries grants and activities. Funding for regional ocean observations, coastal research, coastal zone management, coastal resilience, and estuarine research reserves grants, as well as most activities and staff at the Coral Reef Program and the Integrated Ocean Acidification program would be terminated. Congress rejected similar changes proposed for FY2026. Under the House report, Congress would provide about twice as much funding for NOS than the budget request, and 1% more than the FY2026 enacted amount. The report language would retain existing NOS grants and programs and reject the proposed transfer of certain programs from OAR to NOS.

Alterations to NMFS

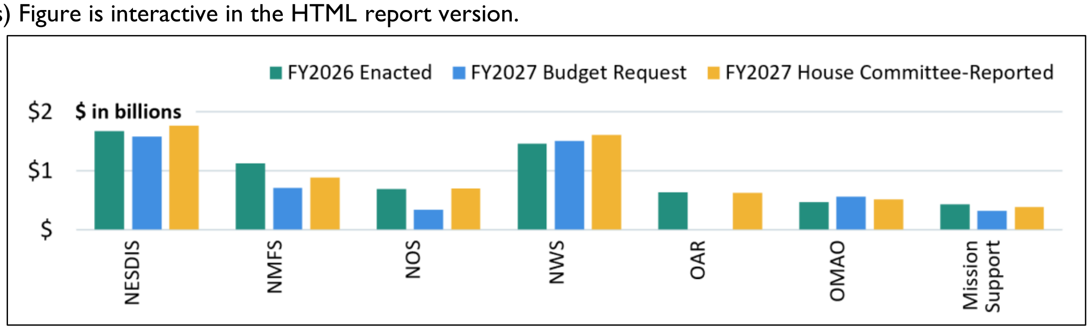
NMFS promotes the conservation, management, and sustainable use of living marine resources, among other activities. The Administration proposed to reduce funding for NMFS for FY2027 by 37% from the FY2026 enacted amount (**Figure 2**). The budget would decrease or terminate all NMFS activities (though the budget for some subactivities would increase) from the FY2026 enacted amount. NOAA proposed to decrease funding for fisheries science and management, enforcement grants, and staff, and to terminate habitat conservation and restoration activities. Additionally, the termination of protected resources science and management activities would align with the Administration's proposed transfer of certain endangered species and marine mammal responsibilities to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). The Administration had proposed similar changes for FY2026, to which Congress did not agree. The House report specified more funding for NMFS than the budget request for FY2027, but 22% less than the FY2026 enacted amount (**Figure 2**). The House report language would retain existing NMFS activities and does not address the proposed transfer of certain responsibilities to FWS.

Other Considerations

In 2025, the Administration reduced NOAA staffing through various means as part of its efforts to increase government efficiency. According to NOAA, the agency had over 12,200 full time equivalent (FTE) employees under the ORF and PAC accounts in FY2024, reduced to just over 11,000 FTEs in FY2026 (FY2025 FTE levels are not available). The effects of staff reductions on NOAA's ability to fulfill its authorities remain unclear. The Administration again proposed in FY2027 to decrease the number of FTEs in the ORF and PAC accounts from their FY2026 levels by about 1,500 total. For FY2027, H.Rept. 119-652 stated that NWS staffing "should be prioritized," but did not discuss the broader NOAA workforce.

Figure 2. NOAA Annual Operations, Research, and Facilities (ORF) and Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction (PAC) Discretionary Obligations by Line Office, FY2026-FY2027

(nominal $s) Figure is interactive in the HTML report version.



Source: CRS, from "Explanatory Statement Submitted by Mr. Cole, Chair of the House Committee on Appropriations, Regarding H.R. 6938, Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026", *Congressional Record*, vol. 172 (January 8, 2026), p. H257; NOAA, *Budget Estimates Fiscal Year 2027, Congressional Justification*; and H.Rept. 119-652.

Notes: See text for abbreviations.

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