

Calendar No. 581

110TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 1834

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 25, 2008

Received; read twice and placed on the calendar

AN ACT

To authorize the national ocean exploration program and the national undersea research program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **TITLE I—NATIONAL OCEAN**
2 **EXPLORATION PROGRAM**

3 **SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This title may be cited as the “National Ocean Explo-
5 ration Program Act”.

6 **SEC. 102. AUTHORIZATION.**

7 The Administrator of the National Oceanic and At-
8 mospheric Administration shall, in consultation with the
9 National Science Foundation and other appropriate Fed-
10 eral agencies, conduct a coordinated national ocean explo-
11 ration program within the National Oceanic and Atmos-
12 pheric Administration that promotes collaboration with
13 other Federal ocean and undersea research and explo-
14 ration programs. To the extent appropriate, the Adminis-
15 trator shall seek to facilitate coordination of data and in-
16 formation management systems, outreach and education
17 programs to improve public understanding of ocean and
18 coastal resources, and development and transfer of tech-
19 nologies to facilitate ocean and undersea research and ex-
20 ploration.

21 **SEC. 103. AUTHORITIES.**

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the program au-
23 thorized under section 102, the Administrator of the Na-
24 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (in this
25 title referred to as the “Administrator”) shall—

1 (1) conduct interdisciplinary voyages or other
2 scientific activities of discovery in conjunction with
3 other Federal agencies or academic or educational
4 institutions, to explore and survey little known areas
5 of the marine environment, inventory, observe, and
6 assess living and nonliving marine resources, and re-
7 port such findings;

8 (2) give priority attention to deep ocean re-
9 gions, with a focus on deep water marine systems
10 that hold potential for important scientific discov-
11 eries, such as hydrothermal vent communities and
12 seamounts;

13 (3) conduct scientific voyages to locate, define,
14 and document historic shipwrecks, submerged sites,
15 and other ocean exploration activities that combine
16 archaeology and oceanographic sciences;

17 (4) develop and implement, in consultation with
18 the National Science Foundation, a transparent,
19 competitive process for merit-based peer-review and
20 approval of proposals for activities to be conducted
21 under this program, taking into consideration advice
22 of the Board established under section 104;

23 (5) enhance the technical capability of the
24 United States marine science community by pro-
25 moting the development of improved oceanographic

1 research, communication, navigation, and data col-
2 lection systems, as well as underwater platforms and
3 sensors and autonomous vehicles; and

4 (6) establish an ocean exploration forum to en-
5 courage partnerships and promote communication
6 among experts and other stakeholders in order to
7 enhance the scientific and technical expertise and
8 relevance of the national program.

9 (b) DONATIONS.—In carrying out the program au-
10 thorized under section 102, the Administrator may accept
11 donations of property, data, and equipment to be applied
12 for the purpose of exploring the oceans or increasing
13 knowledge of the oceans.

14 **SEC. 104. OCEAN EXPLORATION ADVISORY BOARD.**

15 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator shall ap-
16 point an Ocean Exploration Advisory Board composed of
17 experts in relevant fields to—

18 (1) advise the Administrator on priority areas
19 for survey and discovery;

20 (2) assist the program in the development of a
21 five-year strategic plan for the fields of ocean, ma-
22 rine, and Great Lakes science, exploration, and dis-
23 covery;

1 (3) annually review the quality and effectiveness
2 of the proposal review process established under sec-
3 tion 103(4); and

4 (4) provide other assistance and advice as re-
5 quested by the Administrator.

6 (b) FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—Section
7 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C.
8 App.) shall not apply to the Board appointed under sub-
9 section (a).

10 **SEC. 105. APPLICATION WITH OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF**
11 **LANDS ACT.**

12 Nothing in this Act supersedes, or limits the author-
13 ity of the Secretary of the Interior under the Outer Conti-
14 nental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.).

15 **SEC. 106. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

16 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Na-
17 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry
18 out this title—

19 (1) \$30,500,000 for fiscal year 2008;

20 (2) \$33,550,000 for fiscal year 2009;

21 (3) \$36,905,000 for fiscal year 2010;

22 (4) \$40,596,000 for fiscal year 2011;

23 (5) \$44,655,000 for fiscal year 2012;

24 (6) \$49,121,000 for fiscal year 2013; and

25 (7) \$54,033,000 for fiscal year 2014.

1 **TITLE II—UNDERSEA RESEARCH**
2 **PROGRAM**

3 **SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This title may be cited as the “National Undersea
5 Research Program Act of 2007”.

6 **SEC. 202. AUTHORIZATION.**

7 The Administrator of the National Oceanic and At-
8 mospheric Administration shall conduct an undersea re-
9 search, exploration, education, and technology develop-
10 ment program and shall designate a Director of that pro-
11 gram.

12 **SEC. 203. PURPOSE.**

13 The purpose of the program authorized under section
14 202 is to increase scientific knowledge essential for the
15 informed management, use, and preservation of oceanic,
16 marine, coastal, and Great Lakes resources. The Director,
17 in carrying out the program authorized in section 202,
18 shall cooperate with institutions of higher education and
19 other educational marine and ocean science organizations,
20 and shall make available undersea research facilities,
21 equipment, technologies, information, and expertise to
22 support undersea research efforts by these organizations.
23 The Director may also enter into partnerships, using exist-
24 ing authorities, with the private sector to achieve the goals

1 of the program and to promote technological advancement
2 of the marine industry.

3 **SEC. 204. PROGRAM.**

4 The program authorized under section 202 shall be
5 conducted through a national headquarters, a network of
6 extramural regional undersea research centers that rep-
7 resent all relevant National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-
8 ministration regions, and the National Institute for Un-
9 dersea Science and Technology. Overall direction of the
10 program will be developed by the program director with
11 a Council of Center Directors comprised of the directors
12 of the extramural regional centers and the National Insti-
13 tute for Undersea Science and Technology. Draft program
14 direction shall be published not later than 1 year after
15 the date of enactment of this Act. The draft program di-
16 rection shall be published in the Federal Register for a
17 public comment period of not less than 120 days. Final
18 program direction with Agency responses to the comments
19 received shall be published in the Federal Register within
20 90 days after the close of the comment period. The pro-
21 gram director shall update the program direction, with op-
22 portunity for public comment, at least every five years.

23 **SEC. 205. REGIONAL CENTERS AND INSTITUTE.**

24 (a) PROGRAMS.—The following research, exploration,
25 education, and technology programs shall be conducted

1 through the network of extramural regional centers and
2 the National Institute for Undersea Science and Tech-
3 nology:

4 (1) Core research and exploration based on na-
5 tional and regional undersea research priorities.

6 (2) Advanced undersea technology development
7 to support the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
8 Administration's research mission and programs.

9 (3) Development, testing, and transition of ad-
10 vanced undersea technology associated with ocean
11 observatories, submersibles, advanced diving tech-
12 nologies, remotely operated vehicles, autonomous un-
13 derwater vehicles, and new sampling and sensing
14 technologies.

15 (4) Undersea science-based education and out-
16 reach programs to enrich ocean science education
17 and public awareness of the oceans and Great
18 Lakes.

19 (5) Discovery, study, and development of nat-
20 ural products from ocean and aquatic systems.

21 (b) OPERATIONS.—Operation of the extramural re-
22 gional centers and the National Institute for Undersea
23 Science and Technology shall leverage partnerships and
24 cooperative research with academia and private industry.

1 **SEC. 206. COMPETITION.**

2 (a) DISCRETIONARY FUND.—The program shall allo-
3 cate no more than 10 percent of its annual budget to a
4 discretionary fund that may be used only for program ad-
5 ministration and priority undersea research projects iden-
6 tified by the Director but not covered by funding available
7 from centers.

8 (b) COMPETITIVE SELECTION.—The Administrator
9 shall conduct an initial competition to select the regional
10 centers that will participate in the program 90 days after
11 the publication of the final program direction required in
12 section 204 and every five years thereafter. Funding for
13 projects conducted through the regional centers shall be
14 awarded through a competitive, merit-reviewed process on
15 the basis of their relevance to the goals of the program
16 and their technical feasibility.

17 **SEC. 207. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

18 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Na-
19 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry
20 out this title—

- 21 (1) \$17,500,000 for fiscal year 2008;
22 (2) \$19,500,000 for fiscal year 2009;
23 (3) \$21,500,000 for fiscal year 2010;
24 (4) \$23,500,000 for fiscal year 2011;
25 (5) \$25,500,000 for fiscal year 2012;
26 (6) \$27,500,000 for fiscal year 2013; and

1 (7) \$29,500,000 for fiscal year 2014.

2 **TITLE III—INTERAGENCY**
3 **PLANNING AND COORDINATION**

4 **SEC. 301. OCEAN EXPLORATION AND UNDERSEA RESEARCH**
5 **TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE TASK**
6 **FORCE.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Na-
8 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in coordi-
9 nation with the National Science Foundation, the National
10 Aeronautics and Space Administration, the United States
11 Geological Survey, the Department of the Navy, the Min-
12 eral Management Service, and relevant governmental,
13 non-governmental, academic, industry, and other experts,
14 shall convene an ocean exploration and undersea research
15 technology and infrastructure task force to develop and
16 implement a strategy—

17 (1) to facilitate transfer of new exploration and
18 undersea research technology to the programs au-
19 thorized under titles I and II of this Act;

20 (2) to improve availability of communications
21 infrastructure, including satellite capabilities, to
22 such programs;

23 (3) to develop an integrated, workable, and
24 comprehensive data management information proc-
25 essing system that will make information on unique

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