

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2010

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Mollohan and Ranking Member Wolf:

We request your assistance for including the authorized level of \$53 million in the Fiscal Year 2011 Commerce, Justice and Science appropriations bill for the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) and the regional associations under the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Ocean Service. We greatly appreciate your leadership and support for this fundamental program.

IOOS is an essential first step towards improving understanding, predictions and forecasts, stewardship and wise use of the oceans, coastal waters and Great Lakes. Full deployment and operation of the national IOOS provides the data and information necessary for:

- improving the safety and efficiency of marine operations;
- improving predictions of coastal hazards (including storm surge, sea level rise);
- improving forecasting of the affects of a changing climate on coastal communities and ecosystems; and
- helping to protect and restore healthy ecosystems.

The need to restore and enhance the nation's coastal observing capacity has been identified in several national reports, including the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy's "An Ocean Blueprint for the 21st Century" and most recently by the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force's Interim Report. However, federal funding has decreased in recent years for regional ocean observing systems such as the Southern California Coastal Ocean Observing System (SCCOOS) and the Gulf of Maine Ocean Observing System (GoMOOS). The impacts of reduced funding for regional observing systems across the country has reached a critical point where, in some cases, the only option is to remove buoys and instruments from the water.

The authorized funding level of \$53 million—\$33 million for regional observing systems and \$20 million for national data integration and surface current mapping programs—will restore and enhance the existing federal and regional programs. These funds will promote critical observation activities including:

- a national data management system that will connect ocean information among federal agencies and between federal and non-federal regional partners;
- support for regional associations to enhance, manage and deliver information products to users; and

- support for implementation of the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009.

This funding would support existing national IOOS data integration and related observing efforts across NOAA. NOS would also use a competitive grant program to allocate portions of this funding to regional associations, thereby ensuring that the American public receives the greatest return for its investment in the form of a nationally consistent system for critical ocean and coastal information, forecasts and timely warnings.


The United States is facing critical decisions about our future stewardship and management of the oceans, coastal waters and Great Lakes. Improved observations and data management resulting from the IOOS and the regional associations provide the fundamental information to support these decisions. We urge you to fund these programs at the fully authorized level of \$53 million in Fiscal Year 2011.

Sincerely,

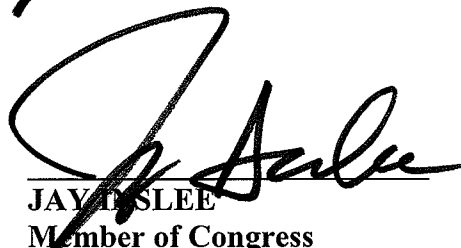

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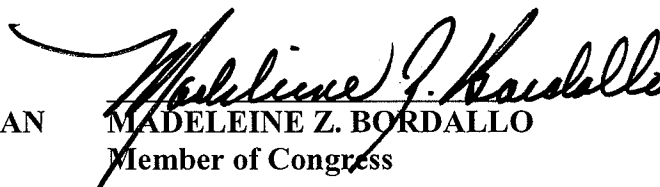

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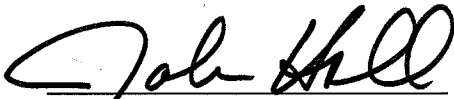

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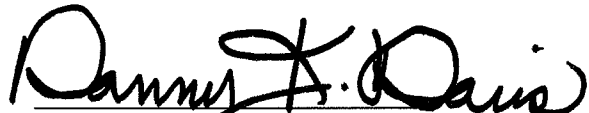

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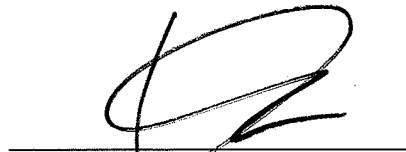

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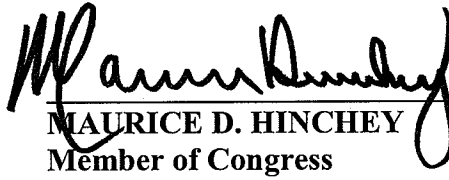

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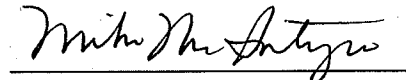

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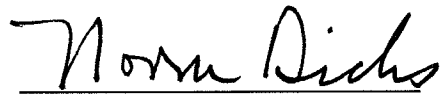

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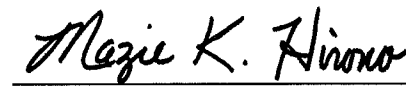

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