

March 23, 2012

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-131, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Vice Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-131, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies
Senate Dirksen Office Building, Room 142
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related
Agencies
Senate Hart Office Building, Room 125
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye, Vice Chairman Cochran, Chair Mikulski, and Ranking Member Hutchison:

As the Committee begins its consideration of the Fiscal Year 2013 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Act, I request support for the following programs:

Agency, Account: Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration—Office of Travel and Tourism Industries—Survey of International Air Travelers

President's Budget Request for FY 13: no funding requested

Amount Requested: +\$2,500,000 above the President's Budget

Description: The Survey of International Air Travelers is an on-going primary research program which gathers statistical data about air passenger travelers in U.S.—overseas and U.S.—Mexican markets. The Survey data provides information on passenger trip planning, travel patterns, demographics and spending for two separate populations—non-U.S. residents traveling to the U.S. and U.S. residents traveling from the U.S. The Administration's budget request would eliminate direct funding for the collection of travel and tourism data through the In-Flight Survey given to inbound international passengers.

Section 203 of the *Travel Promotion Act of 2009* (P.L. 111-145, 22USC §2123a) requires the Office of Travel and Tourism Industries within the Department of Commerce to expand the number of inbound air travelers sampled by the Department's Survey of International Travelers to reach a 1 percent sample size as well as revise the design and format of questionnaires to accommodate a new (electronic) survey instrument. The

Administration's request to eliminate this program is against the spirit and statutory requirements of the Travel Promotion Act.

As the Corporation for Travel Promotion (Brand USA) begins its international marketing campaign, it is incredibly important to collect data and track any changes in overseas visitors through the In-Flight survey completed by passengers aboard inbound international flights. This data is the only source of characteristic and behavioral information on international travelers to and from the USA and is critical to measuring the effectiveness of Brand USA's marketing campaign. I respectfully request \$2,500,000 over the Administration's request to restore funding for the In-Flight survey and to allow the Department of Commerce to test alternative survey formats which will towards the 1 percent sample size required by the *Travel Promotion Act*.

Program Title: Marine Debris Program

President's FY 13 Budget Request: \$0

Amount Requested: \$4,618,000

Agency, Account: NOAA

Description: I oppose the transfer in the President's request of \$4,618,000 from the Marine Debris Program. With the looming threat of debris from the Japanese tsunami, I believe the Marine Debris program should remain in the Office of Response and Restoration in order to keep its focus on its emerging response focus.

Program Title: Mapping and Charting Base

President's FY 13 Budget Request: \$49,344,000

Amount Requested: +\$2,300,000 above the President's Budget

Agency, Account: NOAA

Description: I support the funding in the President's request, but I believe these additional funds are crucial in order to allow for the continued funding of Navigation Response Teams (NRT). NRTs are critical to responding to natural and manmade disasters—they allow ports to quickly reopen and for relief supplies to come in. In addition to their incident response role, they also help reduce the hydrographic backlog. Using FEMA contracts to cover NRT incident response represents an unknown cost, and it is not a cost-effective use of taxpayer dollars, since contractors will not reduce the backlog by only performing incident response.

Program Title: National Center for Coastal Ocean Science (NCCOS)

President's FY 13 Budget Request: \$36,035,000

Amount Requested: +\$344,000 above the President's Budget

Agency, Account: NOAA

Description: I oppose the reduction of \$344,000 in President's request for NCCOS that would result in the closure of the NCCOS labs in Kasitsna Bay, Alaska, and Oxford, Maryland. NOAA has recently spent \$12,000,000 on Kasitsna Bay renovations, and it has leveraged significant funds and cooperation from University of Alaska-Fairbanks. The minor savings realized by closing the lab do not outweigh the significant investment NOAA has made in this facility. NOAA should consider transferring the lab (and supporting funds) from NCCOS to NMFS or OAR control.

Program Title: Fishery Research and Management

President's FY 13 Budget Request: \$430,077,000

Amount Requested: + \$11,658,000 above the President's Request

Agency, Account: NOAA

Description: I support additional funds above the President's request for Fishery Research and Management in order to eliminate the need to reduce salmon management activities (\$6,519,000) and Regional Councils (\$5,139,000). I also strongly support the funding already in the President's budget, which includes important increases for expanding stock assessments (\$4,320,000) and Bering Sea and Aleutian Island groundfish management (\$1,662,000)

Program Title: Climate Competitive Research, Sustained Observations and Regional Info

President's FY 13 Budget Request: \$146,330,000

Amount Requested: Support President's Request, \$146,330,000

Agency, Account: NOAA

Description: I support the President's request for Climate Competitive Research, Sustained Observations and Regional Info, which will allow for an increase of \$4,601,000 for Global Ocean Observing System, enabling increased research to understand the rapidly changing Arctic.

Program Title: Integrated Ocean Acidification

President's FY 13 Budget Request: \$6,400,000

Amount Requested: Support President's Request, \$6,400,000

Agency, Account: NOAA

Description: I support the President's request for Integrated Ocean Acidification, which would allow continued critical research on ocean acidification.

Program Title: National Sea Grant College Program

President's FY 13 Budget Request: \$61,648,000

Amount Requested: +\$999,000

Agency, Account: NOAA

Description: I support additional funds, at the FY 12 level, for the National Sea Grant College Program in order to allow for the continuation of the Aquatic Invasive Species Program.

Program Title: Local Warnings and Forecast Base

President's FY 13 Budget Request: \$628,564,000

Amount Requested: +\$9,741,000 above the President's Budget

Agency, Account: NOAA

Description: The increase would prevent the elimination of 98 Information Technology Officers at Weather Forecast Offices around the country. ITO's are needed on-scene during severe weather events to ensure the WFO's ability to provide critical warnings and notifications, especially as AWIPS II is rolled out.

Program Title: Strengthen US Tsunami Warning Network

President's FY 13 Budget Request: \$18,912,000

Amount Requested: Support President's FY 12 Request of \$23,466,000

Agency, Account: NOAA

Description: I support funding at the FY 12 level for the Strengthen US Tsunami Warning Network in order to eliminate the need to cut maintenance of DART buoys and other critical tsunami warning programs.

Program Title: NESDIS Systems Acquisitions

President's FY 13 Budget Request: \$1,848,081,000

Amount Requested: Support President's Request of \$1,848,081,000

Agency, Account: NOAA

Description: I support the President's request for NOAA satellites support forecasts for the weather-sensitive industries that make up one-third of the nation's Gross Domestic Product, as well as allowing weather forecasters to save lives and property with accurate forecasts. Funding at this level would allow for continued funding for the JPSS program (\$916,364,000) and GOES-R program (\$802,000,000), as well as allow for enhancements in the space weather forecasts with the DSCOVR satellite (\$22,883,000).

Program Title: Fleet Capital Improvements and Technology Infusion

President's FY 13 Budget Request: \$11,712,000

Amount Requested: +\$5,000,000 above the President's Budget

Agency, Account: NOAA, Fleet Replacement

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Description: The increase would allow NOAA to begin to construct a replacement homeport for the NOAA Ship Fairweather, while keeping critical major repair periods for NOAA ships on track.

Program Title: Marine Operations and Maintenance

President's FY 13 Budget Request: \$166,015,000

Amount Requested: +\$5,000,000 above the President's Budget

Agency, Account: NOAA, Marine Operations and Maintenance

Description: NOAA's ship fleet provides critical support for fisheries stock assessments, nautical charting, and other research areas. The increase would allow OMAO to increase the number of sea days it provides to the NOAA line offices, and begin to return to the level of support it has provided in the past.

If you have any questions, please contact Cory Turner of my staff at (202) 224-3004.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich
United States Senator