March 13, 2020

José Serrano, Chairman  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science and Related Agencies  
H-307 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Robert Aderholt, Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, and Science and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

RE: FY 2021 Appropriations for the NOAA Office of Oceans and Atmospheric Research

Dear Chairman Serrano and Ranking Member Aderholt,

I am pleased to provide testimony on behalf of the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities’ (APLU) Board on Oceans, Atmosphere, and Climate (BOAC) supporting increased funding within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to advance critical scientific research.

While APLU has many priorities in the CJS bill including within the National Science Foundation (NSF), National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and Economic Development Administration (EDA), this testimony is limited to BOAC’s interest in NOAA.¹

APLU is a research, policy, and advocacy organization dedicated to strengthening and advancing the work of public universities. With a membership of over 200 public research universities, land-grant institutions, state university systems, and affiliated organizations, APLU’s agenda is built on the three pillars of increasing degree completion and academic success, advancing scientific research, and expanding engagement. Annually, our U.S. member campuses enroll 4.3 million undergraduates and 1.2 million graduate students, award 1.2 million degrees, employ 1.1 million faculty and staff, and conduct $46.7 billion in university-based research. BOAC’s mission is to provide support for issues involving university-based programs in marine, atmospheric, and climatological sciences. BOAC representatives are chosen by university

¹ For a full list of APLU subcommittee requests, please visit: https://www.aplu.org/members/councils/governmental-affairs/CGA-library/fy2021-commerce-justice-science-approps-advocacy-document/file
presidents and chancellors to serve and include some of the nation's leading research and educational experts in atmospheric, marine, and climate disciplines.

We thank you for your past support of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and greatly appreciate the opportunity to provide recommendations for FY 2021. For FY2021, APLU BOAC requests $592 million for NOAA’s Office of Oceans and Atmospheric Research (OAR), including $82.9 million for the National Sea Grant College Program and $15 million for Sea Grant Aquaculture.

NOAA is responsible for providing the nation with weather, climate, and atmospheric information as well as protecting, conserving and managing the use of natural resources, all of which impact the economy and the safety of millions of around the world. The NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) provides the research and scientific foundation for answering the grand challenges facing the natural environment for the next decade and beyond. OAR provides the foundation for observations, monitoring, and modeling to help entities at all levels—federal, state, local, and private—manage their resources as well as plan for and respond to natural disasters.

Recent OAR research has focused on forecasting energy demand scenarios, seasonal wildfires, and large storm events; assessing local impacts of projected sea-level rise; improving seasonal precipitation and drought predictions; and understanding atmospheric rivers and other causes of extreme flooding. OAR also supports basic research that improves understanding of ocean and atmospheric processes. Research is translated into information used by private businesses and public sector managers across all levels of business and government. NOAA’s predictive capabilities would be unfulfilled without continuous improvement of OAR’s facilities, analytical capabilities, and the networks of experts that are supported by OAR. The office also supports sixteen extramural research partnerships through the Cooperative Institutes, which are allocated competitively, as well as several NOAA laboratories. Many researchers at APLU institutions rely on the extramural support, but equally as important are partnerships with the laboratories. APLU BOAC requests $592 million for NOAA OAR in FY2021.

Housed within OAR, the National Sea Grant Program is a nationwide network of university-based programs for research, education, and advisory services focused on the conservation and development of marine resources. A joint federal, state, and local partnership, Sea Grant provides solutions for the issues affecting our nation’s coastal communities (including the Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, communities on the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Pacific coasts), yielding quantifiable economic, social, and environmental benefits.

The National Sea Grant Program works to turn research into action, ensuring that coastal communities are economic engines and remain resilient in the face of natural hazards. In 2018, Sea Grant activities resulted in over 7,000 jobs created or retained, $624 million dollars in economic benefit to the communities they serve, and the training of over 1,994 undergraduate and graduate students. Sea Grant leverages $3 for every $1 of federal money it receives. In 2018, Sea Grant worked with nearly 1,300 industry and private sector, local, state and regional partners.
and assisted 269 communities with technical assistance. Sea Grant works with local communities to address the unique problems they face, such as combatting ocean acidification and harmful algal blooms to working with tribal groups to mitigate against rising sea levels and other challenges. **APLU BOAC requests FY2021 funding of $82.9 million.**

A part of the larger Sea Grant program, the *Sea Grant Marine Aquaculture* program supports research on breeding, rearing, and harvesting of animals and plants in water environments. The Sea Grant Marine and Great Lakes Aquaculture program supports the development of innovations in the aquaculture industry, technology transfer, and supports America’s expanding aquaculture industry. Pressures on climate resiliency, rising sea levels, changes in ocean chemistry, and an ever-dynamic industry places additional demands on an already small program. **APLU BOAC requests $15 million for Sea Grant Marine Aquaculture.**

BOAC thanks you for the opportunity to provide our views to the Subcommittee. We look forward to working with you through the FY2021 appropriations process.

Sincerely,

Douglas L. Steele  
Vice President  
Office of Food, Agriculture, and Natural Resources  
APLU