

108TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 1218

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## AN ACT

To provide for Presidential support and coordination of inter-agency ocean science programs and development and coordination of a comprehensive and integrated United States research and monitoring program.

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

3        **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4        This Act may be cited as the “Oceans and Human  
5        Health Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.**

2 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress makes the following  
3 findings:

4 (1) The rich biodiversity of marine organisms  
5 provides society with an essential biomedical re-  
6 source, a promising source of novel compounds with  
7 therapeutic potential, and a potentially important  
8 contribution to the national economy.

9 (2) The diversity of ocean life and research on  
10 the health of marine organisms, including marine  
11 mammals and other sentinel species, helps scientists  
12 in their efforts to investigate and understand human  
13 physiology and biochemical processes, as well as pro-  
14 viding a means for monitoring the health of marine  
15 ecosystems.

16 (3) The oceans drive climate and weather fac-  
17 tors causing severe weather events and shifts in tem-  
18 perature and rainfall patterns that affect the density  
19 and distribution of disease-causing organisms and  
20 the ability of public health systems to address them.

21 (4) The oceans act as a route of exposure for  
22 human disease and illnesses through ingestion of  
23 contaminated seafood and direct contact with sea-  
24 water containing toxins and disease-causing orga-  
25 nisms.

1           (5) During the past two decades, the incidence  
2 of harmful blooms of algae and hypoxia has in-  
3 creased in United States coastal waters, including  
4 the Great Lakes, and around the world, contami-  
5 nating shellfish, causing widespread fish kills,  
6 threatening marine environmental quality and result-  
7 ing in substantial economic losses to coastal commu-  
8 nities.

9           (6) Existing Federal programs and resources  
10 support research in a number of these areas, but  
11 gaps in funding, coordination, and outreach have im-  
12 peded national progress in addressing ocean health  
13 issues.

14           (7) National investment in a coordinated pro-  
15 gram of research and monitoring would improve un-  
16 derstanding of marine ecosystems, allow prediction  
17 and prevention of marine public health problems and  
18 assist in realizing the potential of the oceans to con-  
19 tribute to the development of effective new treat-  
20 ments of human diseases and a greater under-  
21 standing of human biology.

22           (b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this Act are to pro-  
23 vide for—

24           (1) Presidential support and coordination of  
25 interagency ocean science programs; and

1           (2) development and coordination of a com-  
2           prehensive and integrated United States ocean,  
3           coastal, and Great Lakes research and monitoring  
4           program that will assist this Nation and the world  
5           to understand, use and respond to the role of the  
6           oceans in human health.

7   **SEC. 3. INTERAGENCY OCEANS AND HUMAN HEALTH RE-**  
8                           **SEARCH PROGRAM.**

9           (a) COORDINATION.—The President, through the Na-  
10          tional Science and Technology Council, shall coordinate  
11          and support a national research program to improve un-  
12          derstanding of the role of the oceans in human health.

13          (b) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—Within 1 year after  
14          the date of enactment of this Act, the National Science  
15          and Technology Council, through the Director of the Of-  
16          fice of Science and Technology Policy shall develop and  
17          submit to the Congress a plan for coordinated Federal ac-  
18          tivities under the program. Nothing in this subsection is  
19          intended to duplicate or supersede the activities of the  
20          Inter-Agency Task Force on Harmful Algal Blooms and  
21          Hypoxia established under section 603 of the Harmful  
22          Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of  
23          1998 (16 U.S.C. 1451 note). In developing the plan, the  
24          Committee will consult with the Inter-Agency Task Force  
25          on Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia. Such plan will

1 build on and complement the ongoing activities of the Na-  
2 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Na-  
3 tional Science Foundation, and other departments and  
4 agencies and shall—

5           (1) establish, for the 10-year period beginning  
6           in the year it is submitted, the goals and priorities  
7           for Federal research which most effectively advance  
8           scientific understanding of the connections between  
9           the oceans and human health, provide usable infor-  
10          mation for the prediction of marine-related public  
11          health problems and use the biological potential of  
12          the oceans for development of new treatments of  
13          human diseases and a greater understanding of  
14          human biology;

15          (2) describe specific activities required to  
16          achieve such goals and priorities, including the fund-  
17          ing of competitive research grants, ocean and coastal  
18          observations, training and support for scientists, and  
19          participation in international research efforts;

20          (3) identify and address, as appropriate, rel-  
21          evant programs and activities of the Federal agen-  
22          cies and departments that would contribute to the  
23          program;

24          (4) consider and use, as appropriate, reports  
25          and studies conducted by Federal agencies and de-

1       partments, the National Research Council, the  
2       Ocean Research Advisory Panel, the Commission on  
3       Ocean Policy and other expert scientific bodies;

4               (5) make recommendations for the coordination  
5       of program activities with ocean and human health-  
6       related activities of other national and international  
7       organizations; and

8               (6) estimate Federal funding for research ac-  
9       tivities to be conducted under the program.

10       (c) PROGRAM SCOPE.—The program may include the  
11      following activities related to the role of oceans in human  
12      health:

13               (1) Interdisciplinary research among the ocean  
14      and medical sciences, and coordinated research and  
15      activities to improve understanding of processes  
16      within the ocean that may affect human health and  
17      to explore the potential contribution of marine orga-  
18      nisms to medicine and research, including—

19                       (A) vector- and water-borne diseases of hu-  
20      mans and marine organisms, including marine  
21      mammals and fish;

22                       (B) harmful algal blooms and hypoxia  
23      (through the Inter-Agency Task Force on  
24      Harmful Algal Blooms and Hypoxia);

25                       (C) marine-derived pharmaceuticals;

1 (D) marine organisms as models for bio-  
2 medical research and as indicators of marine  
3 environmental health;

4 (E) marine environmental microbiology;

5 (F) bioaccumulative and endocrine-dis-  
6 rupting chemical contaminants; and

7 (G) predictive models based on indicators  
8 of marine environmental health or public health  
9 threats.

10 (2) Coordination with the National Ocean Re-  
11 search Leadership Council (10 U.S.C. 7902(a)) to  
12 ensure that any integrated ocean and coastal observ-  
13 ing system provides information necessary to mon-  
14 itor and reduce marine public health problems in-  
15 cluding health-related data on biological populations  
16 and detection of contaminants in marine waters and  
17 seafood.

18 (3) Development through partnerships among  
19 Federal agencies, States, or academic institutions of  
20 new technologies and approaches for detecting and  
21 reducing hazards to human health from ocean  
22 sources and to strengthen understanding of the  
23 value of marine biodiversity to biomedicine,  
24 including—

1 (A) genomics and proteomics to develop  
2 genetic and immunological detection approaches  
3 and predictive tools and to discover new bio-  
4 medical resources;

5 (B) biomaterials and bioengineering;

6 (C) in situ and remote sensors used to de-  
7 tect, quantify, and predict the presence and  
8 spread of contaminants in marine waters and  
9 organisms and to identify new genetic resources  
10 for biomedical purposes;

11 (D) techniques for supplying marine re-  
12 sources, including chemical synthesis, culturing  
13 and aquaculturing marine organisms, new fer-  
14 mentation methods and recombinant tech-  
15 niques; and

16 (E) adaptation of equipment and tech-  
17 nologies from human health fields.

18 (4) Support for scholars, trainees and education  
19 opportunities that encourage an interdisciplinary  
20 and international approach to exploring the diversity  
21 of life in the oceans.

22 (d) ANNUAL REPORT.—Beginning with the first year  
23 occurring more than 24 months after the date of enact-  
24 ment of this Act, the National Science and Technology  
25 Council, through the Director of the Office of Science and

1 Technology Policy shall prepare and submit to the Presi-  
2 dent and the Congress not later than January 31st of each  
3 year an annual report on the activities conducted pursuant  
4 to this Act during the preceding fiscal year, including—

5 (1) a summary of the achievements of Federal  
6 oceans and human health research, including Feder-  
7 ally supported external research, during the pre-  
8 ceding fiscal year;

9 (2) an analysis of the progress made toward  
10 achieving the goals and objectives of the plan devel-  
11 oped under subsection (b), including identification of  
12 trends and emerging trends;

13 (3) a copy or summary of the plan and any  
14 changes made in the plan;

15 (4) a summary of agency budgets for oceans  
16 and human health activities for that preceding fiscal  
17 year; and

18 (5) any recommendations regarding additional  
19 action or legislation that may be required to assist  
20 in achieving the purposes of this title.

21 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINIS-**  
22 **TRATION OCEANS AND HUMAN HEALTH INI-**  
23 **TIATIVE.**

24 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—As part of the interagency  
25 program planned and coordinated under section 3, the

1 Secretary of Commerce is authorized to establish an  
2 Oceans and Human Health Initiative to coordinate and  
3 implement research and activities of the National Oceanic  
4 and Atmospheric Administration related to the role of the  
5 oceans, the coasts, and the Great Lakes in human health.  
6 In carrying out this section, the Secretary shall consult  
7 with other Federal agencies conducting integrated oceans  
8 and human health research and research in related areas,  
9 including the National Science Foundation. The Oceans  
10 and Human Health Initiative is authorized to provide sup-  
11 port for—

- 12 (1) centralized program and research coordina-  
13 tion;
- 14 (2) an advisory panel;
- 15 (3) one or more National Oceanic and Atmos-  
16 pheric Administration national centers of excellence;
- 17 (4) research grants; and
- 18 (5) distinguished scholars and traineeships.

19 (b) ADVISORY PANEL.—The Secretary is authorized  
20 to establish an oceans and human health advisory panel  
21 to assist in the development and implementation of the  
22 Oceans and Human Health Initiative. Membership of the  
23 advisory group shall provide for balanced representation  
24 of individuals with multi-disciplinary expertise in the ma-  
25 rine and biomedical sciences. The Federal Advisory Com-

1 mittee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the oceans  
2 and human health advisory panel.

3 (c) NATIONAL CENTERS.—(1) The Secretary is au-  
4 thorized to identify and provide financial support through  
5 a competitive process to develop, within the National Oce-  
6 anic and Atmospheric Administration, for one or more  
7 centers of excellence that strengthen the capabilities of the  
8 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to  
9 carry out its programs and activities related to the oceans’  
10 role in human health.

11 (2) The centers shall focus on areas related to agency  
12 missions, including use of marine organisms as indicators  
13 for marine environmental health, ocean pollutants, marine  
14 toxins and pathogens, harmful algal blooms, hypoxia, sea-  
15 food testing, drug discovery, and biology and pathobiology  
16 of marine mammals, and on disciplines including marine  
17 genomics, marine environmental microbiology, ecological  
18 chemistry and conservation medicine.

19 (3) In selecting centers for funding, the Secretary will  
20 give priority to proposals with strong interdisciplinary sci-  
21 entific merit that encourage educational opportunities and  
22 provide for effective partnerships among the Administra-  
23 tion, other Federal entities, State, academic, medical, and  
24 industry participants.

1           (d) EXTRAMURAL RESEARCH GRANTS.—(1) The Sec-  
2 retary is authorized to provide grants of financial assist-  
3 ance to the scientific community for critical research and  
4 projects that explore the relationship between the oceans  
5 and human health and that complement or strengthen  
6 programs and activities of the National Oceanic and At-  
7 mospheric Administration related to the ocean’s role in  
8 human health. Officers and employees of Federal agencies  
9 may collaborate with, and participate in, such research  
10 and projects to the extent requested by the grant recipient.  
11 The Secretary shall consult with the oceans and human  
12 health advisory panel established under subsection (b) and  
13 may work cooperatively with other agencies participating  
14 in the interagency program under section 3 to establish  
15 joint criteria for such research and projects.

16           (2) Grants under this subsection shall be awarded  
17 through a competitive peer-reviewed, merit-based process  
18 that may be conducted jointly with other agencies partici-  
19 pating in the interagency program established in section  
20 3 or under the National Oceanographic Partnership Pro-  
21 gram under section 7901 of title 10, United States Code.

22           (e) DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS AND TRAINEE-  
23 SHIPS.—(1) The Secretary is authorized to designate and  
24 provide financial assistance to support distinguished schol-  
25 ars from academic institutions, industry, State govern-

1 ments, or other Federal agencies for collaborative work  
2 with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
3 scientists and facilities.

4 (2) The Secretary of Commerce is authorized to es-  
5 tablish a program to provide traineeships, training, and  
6 experience to pre-doctoral and post-doctoral students and  
7 to scientists at the beginning of their careers who are in-  
8 terested in the oceans in human health research conducted  
9 under the NOAA initiative.

10 **SEC. 5. PUBLIC INFORMATION AND OUTREACH.**

11 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of Commerce,  
12 in consultation with other appropriate Federal agencies  
13 shall design and implement a national information and  
14 outreach program on potential ocean-related human  
15 health risks, including health hazards associated with the  
16 human consumption of seafood. Under such program, the  
17 Secretary shall—

18 (1) collect information on the incidence and lo-  
19 cations of ocean-related health hazards and illnesses;

20 (2) disseminate such information to any appro-  
21 priate Federal or State agency, involved industries,  
22 and other interested persons; and

23 (3) assess and make recommendations for ob-  
24 serving systems to support the program.

1 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

2 (a) NOAA OCEANS AND HUMAN HEALTH INITIA-  
3 TIVE.—There are authorized to be appropriated to the  
4 Secretary of Commerce to carry out the National Oceanic  
5 and Atmospheric Administration Oceans and Human  
6 Health Initiative established under section 4, \$12,000,000  
7 for fiscal year 2005, \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2006, and  
8 \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2007 and 2008. Not  
9 less than 50 percent of the amounts appropriated to carry  
10 out the initiative for each fiscal year shall be utilized to  
11 support the programs described in subsections (d) and (e)  
12 of section 4.

13 (b) PUBLIC INFORMATION.—There are authorized to  
14 be appropriated to the Secretary to carry out the public  
15 information and outreach program established under sec-  
16 tion 5, \$3,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2005 through  
17 2007.

Passed the Senate March 24, 2004.

Attest:

*Secretary.*

108<sup>TH</sup> CONGRESS  
2<sup>D</sup> SESSION

**S. 1218**

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**AN ACT**

To provide for Presidential support and coordination of interagency ocean science programs and development and coordination of a comprehensive and integrated United States research and monitoring program.