

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2280

AN ACT

To establish a coordinated national ocean exploration 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,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

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

1 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT.**

2 The Secretary of Commerce, through the Adminis-
3 trator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-
4 tration, shall, in consultation with the National Science
5 Foundation and other appropriate Federal agencies, es-
6 tablish a coordinated national ocean exploration program
7 within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-
8 tion.

9 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES.**

10 The purposes of the program are the following:

11 (1) To explore the physical, biological, chemical,
12 geological, archaeological, temporal, and other re-
13 lated characteristics of the oceans to benefit, inform,
14 and inspire the American people.

15 (2) To create missions and scientific activities
16 of discovery that will improve our understanding, ap-
17 preciation, and stewardship of the unique marine
18 ecosystems, organisms, chemistry, and geology of the
19 world's oceans, and to enhance knowledge of sub-
20 merged maritime historical and archaeological sites.

21 (3) To facilitate discovery of marine natural
22 products from these ecosystems that may have po-
23 tential beneficial uses, including those that may help
24 combat disease or provide therapeutic benefits.

25 (4) To communicate such discoveries and
26 knowledge to policymakers, regulators, researchers,

1 educators, and interested nongovernmental entities
2 in order to support policy decisions and to spur ad-
3 ditional scientific research and development.

4 (5) To maximize effectiveness by integrating
5 multiple scientific disciplines, employing the diverse
6 resources of the ocean science community, and mak-
7 ing ocean exploration data and information available
8 in a timely and consistent manner.

9 (6) To achieve heightened education, environ-
10 mental literacy, public understanding and apprecia-
11 tion of the oceans.

12 **SEC. 4. AUTHORITIES.**

13 In carrying out the program the Administrator of the
14 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall—

15 (1) conduct interdisciplinary exploration voy-
16 ages or other scientific activities in conjunction with
17 other Federal agencies or academic or educational
18 institutions, to survey little known areas of the ma-
19 rine environment, inventory, observe, and assess liv-
20 ing and nonliving marine resources, and report such
21 findings;

22 (2) give priority attention to deep ocean re-
23 gions, with a focus on surveying deep water marine
24 systems that hold potential for important scientific

1 and medical discoveries, such as hydrothermal vent
2 communities and seamounts;

3 (3) conduct scientific voyages to locate, define,
4 and document historic shipwrecks, submerged sites,
5 and other ocean exploration activities that combine
6 archaeology and oceanographic sciences;

7 (4) develop, in consultation with the National
8 Science Foundation, a transparent process for re-
9 viewing and approving proposals for activities to be
10 conducted under this program;

11 (5) enhance the technical capability of the
12 United States marine science community by pro-
13 moting the development of improved oceanographic
14 research, communication, navigation, and data col-
15 lection systems, as well as underwater platforms and
16 sensors;

17 (6) conduct public education and outreach ac-
18 tivities that improve the public understanding of
19 ocean science, resources, and processes, in conjunc-
20 tion with relevant educational programs of the Na-
21 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the
22 National Science Foundation, and other agencies;

23 (7) accept donations of property, data, and
24 equipment to be applied for the purpose of exploring

1 the oceans or increasing knowledge of the oceans;
2 and

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

8 **SEC. 5. EXPLORATION TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUC-**
9 **TURE TASK FORCE.**

10 The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-
11 tion, in coordination with the National Aeronautics and
12 Space Administration, the U.S. Geological Survey, Office
13 of Naval Research, and relevant governmental, non-gov-
14 ernmental, academic, and other experts, shall convene an
15 ocean technology and infrastructure task force to develop
16 and implement a strategy—

17 (1) to facilitate transfer of new exploration
18 technology to the program;

19 (2) to improve availability of communications
20 infrastructure, including satellite capabilities, to the
21 program;

22 (3) to develop an integrated, workable and com-
23 prehensive data management information processing
24 system that will make information on unique and

1 significant features obtained by the program avail-
2 able for research and management purposes; and

3 (4) to encourage cost-sharing partnerships with
4 governmental and non-governmental entities that
5 will assist in transferring exploration technology and
6 technical expertise to the program.

7 **SEC. 6. INTERAGENCY FINANCING.**

8 The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-
9 tion, the National Science Foundation, and other Federal
10 agencies involved in the program, are authorized to par-
11 ticipate in interagency financing and share, transfer, re-
12 ceive and spend funds appropriated to any federal partici-
13 pant the program for the purposes of carrying out any
14 administrative or programmatic project or activity under
15 this section. Funds may be transferred among such de-
16 partments and agencies through an appropriate instru-
17 ment that specifies the goods, services, or space being ac-
18 quired from another Federal participant and the costs of
19 the same.

20 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

21 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Na-
22 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry
23 out the program—

24 (1) \$45,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2005
25 through 2010; and

- 1 (2) \$55,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2011
- 2 through 2016.

Passed the Senate November 16, 2004.

Attest:

Secretary.

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