

108TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. 2280

To establish a coordinated national ocean exploration program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

APRIL 5, 2004

Mr. STEVENS (for himself, Mr. HOLLINGS, and Mr. INOUE) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

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”.

6 **SEC. 2. ESTABLISHMENT.**

7 The Secretary of Commerce, through the Adminis-
8 trator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-
9 tration, shall, in consultation with the National Science

1 Foundation and other appropriate Federal agencies, es-
2 tablish a coordinated national ocean exploration program
3 within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-
4 tion.

5 **SEC. 3. PURPOSES.**

6 The purposes of the program are the following:

7 (1) To explore the physical, biological, chemical,
8 geological, archaeological, temporal, and other re-
9 lated characteristics of the oceans to benefit, inform,
10 and inspire the American people.

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

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

21 (4) To communicate such discoveries and
22 knowledge to policymakers, regulators, researchers,
23 educators, and interested nongovernmental entities
24 in order to support policy decisions and to spur ad-
25 ditional scientific research and development.

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

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

9 **SEC. 4. AUTHORITIES.**

10 In carrying out the program the Administrator of the
11 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall—

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

19 (2) give priority attention to deep ocean re-
20 gions, with a focus on surveying deep water marine
21 systems that hold potential for important scientific
22 and medical discoveries, such as hydrothermal vent
23 communities and seamounts;

24 (3) conduct scientific voyages to locate, define,
25 and document historic shipwrecks, submerged sites,

1 and other ocean exploration activities that combine
2 archaeology and oceanographic sciences;

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

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

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

19 (7) accept donations of property, data, and
20 equipment to be applied for the purpose of exploring
21 the oceans or increasing knowledge of the oceans;
22 and

23 (8) establish an ocean exploration forum to en-
24 courage partnerships and promote communication
25 among experts and other stakeholders in order to

1 enhance the scientific and technical expertise and
2 relevance of the national program.

3 **SEC. 5. EXPLORATION TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUC-**
4 **TURE TASK FORCE.**

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

12 (1) to facilitate transfer of new exploration
13 technology to the program;

14 (2) to improve availability of communications
15 infrastructure, including satellite capabilities, to the
16 program;

17 (3) to develop an integrated, workable and com-
18 prehensive data management information processing
19 system that will make information on unique and
20 significant features obtained by the program avail-
21 able for research and management purposes; and

22 (4) to encourage cost-sharing partnerships with
23 governmental and non-governmental entities that
24 will assist in transferring exploration technology and
25 technical expertise to the program.

1 **SEC. 6. INTERAGENCY FINANCING.**

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

14 **SEC. 7. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

15 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Na-
16 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry
17 out the program—

18 (1) \$45,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2005
19 through 2010; and

20 (2) \$55,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2011
21 through 2016.

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