^{110TH CONGRESS} 2D SESSION H.R. 1834

AN ACT

- To authorize the national ocean exploration program and the national undersea research 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,

TITLE I—NATIONAL OCEAN EXPLORATION PROGRAM

3 SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.

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

6 SEC. 102. AUTHORIZATION.

7 The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall, in consultation with the 8 9 National Science Foundation and other appropriate Fed-10 eral agencies, conduct a coordinated national ocean explo-11 ration program within the National Oceanic and Atmos-12 pheric Administration that promotes collaboration with other Federal ocean and undersea research and explo-13 14 ration programs. To the extent appropriate, the Adminis-15 trator shall seek to facilitate coordination of data and information management systems, outreach and education 16 programs to improve public understanding of ocean and 17 18 coastal resources, and development and transfer of tech-19 nologies to facilitate ocean and undersea research and ex-20 ploration.

21 SEC. 103. AUTHORITIES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the program authorized under section 102, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (in this
title referred to as the "Administrator") shall—

1 (1) conduct interdisciplinary voyages or other 2 scientific activities of discovery in conjunction with 3 other Federal agencies or academic or educational 4 institutions, to explore and survey little known areas 5 of the marine environment, inventory, observe, and 6 assess living and nonliving marine resources, and re-7 port such findings;

8 (2) give priority attention to deep ocean re-9 gions, with a focus on deep water marine systems 10 that hold potential for important scientific discov-11 eries, such as hydrothermal vent communities and 12 seamounts;

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

(4) develop and implement, in consultation with
the National Science Foundation, a transparent,
competitive process for merit-based peer-review and
approval of proposals for activities to be conducted
under this program, taking into consideration advice
of the Board established under section 104;

(5) enhance the technical capability of the
United States marine science community by promoting the development of improved oceanographic

research, communication, navigation, and data col lection systems, as well as underwater platforms and
 sensors and autonomous vehicles; and

4 (6) establish an ocean exploration forum to en5 courage partnerships and promote communication
6 among experts and other stakeholders in order to
7 enhance the scientific and technical expertise and
8 relevance of the national program.

9 (b) DONATIONS.—In carrying out the program au-10 thorized under section 102, the Administrator may accept 11 donations of property, data, and equipment to be applied 12 for the purpose of exploring the oceans or increasing 13 knowledge of the oceans.

14 SEC. 104. OCEAN EXPLORATION ADVISORY BOARD.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator shall appoint an Ocean Exploration Advisory Board composed of
experts in relevant fields to—

18 (1) advise the Administrator on priority areas19 for survey and discovery;

20 (2) assist the program in the development of a
21 five-year strategic plan for the fields of ocean, ma22 rine, and Great Lakes science, exploration, and dis23 covery;

4

(3) annually review the quality and effectiveness
 of the proposal review process established under sec tion 103(4); and

4 (4) provide other assistance and advice as re-5 quested by the Administrator.

6 (b) FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—Section
7 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C.
8 App.) shall not apply to the Board appointed under sub9 section (a).

10SEC. 105. APPLICATION WITH OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF11LANDS ACT.

Nothing in this Act supersedes, or limits the authority of the Secretary of the Interior under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.).

15 SEC. 106. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

16 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Na17 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry
18 out this title—

- 19 (1) \$30,500,000 for fiscal year 2008;
- 20 (2) \$33,550,000 for fiscal year 2009;
- 21 (3) \$36,905,000 for fiscal year 2010;
- 22 (4) \$40,596,000 for fiscal year 2011;
- 23 (5) \$44,655,000 for fiscal year 2012;
- 24 (6) \$49,121,000 for fiscal year 2013; and
- 25 (7) \$54,033,000 for fiscal year 2014.

TITLE II—UNDERSEA RESEARCH PROGRAM

3 SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.

4 This title may be cited as the "National Undersea5 Research Program Act of 2007".

6 SEC. 202. AUTHORIZATION.

7 The Administrator of the National Oceanic and At8 mospheric Administration shall conduct an undersea re9 search, exploration, education, and technology develop10 ment program and shall designate a Director of that pro11 gram.

12 SEC. 203. PURPOSE.

13 The purpose of the program authorized under section 14 202 is to increase scientific knowledge essential for the informed management, use, and preservation of oceanic, 15 marine, coastal, and Great Lakes resources. The Director, 16 in carrying out the program authorized in section 202, 17 18 shall cooperate with institutions of higher education and 19 other educational marine and ocean science organizations, 20and shall make available undersea research facilities, 21equipment, technologies, information, and expertise to 22 support undersea research efforts by these organizations. 23 The Director may also enter into partnerships, using exist-24 ing authorities, with the private sector to achieve the goals of the program and to promote technological advancement
 of the marine industry.

3 SEC. 204. PROGRAM.

4 The program authorized under section 202 shall be 5 conducted through a national headquarters, a network of extramural regional undersea research centers that rep-6 7 resent all relevant National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-8 ministration regions, and the National Institute for Un-9 dersea Science and Technology. Overall direction of the 10 program will be developed by the program director with a Council of Center Directors comprised of the directors 11 12 of the extramural regional centers and the National Insti-13 tute for Undersea Science and Technology. Draft program direction shall be published not later than 1 year after 14 15 the date of enactment of this Act. The draft program direction shall be published in the Federal Register for a 16 17 public comment period of not less than 120 days. Final program direction with Agency responses to the comments 18 19 received shall be published in the Federal Register within 20 90 days after the close of the comment period. The pro-21 gram director shall update the program direction, with op-22 portunity for public comment, at least every five years. 23 SEC. 205. REGIONAL CENTERS AND INSTITUTE.

(a) PROGRAMS.—The following research, exploration,education, and technology programs shall be conducted

- 4 (1) Core research and exploration based on na-5 tional and regional undersea research priorities.
- 6 (2) Advanced undersea technology development
 7 to support the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
 8 Administration's research mission and programs.
- 9 (3) Development, testing, and transition of ad-10 vanced undersea technology associated with ocean 11 observatories, submersibles, advanced diving tech-12 nologies, remotely operated vehicles, autonomous un-13 derwater vehicles, and new sampling and sensing 14 technologies.
- (4) Undersea science-based education and outreach programs to enrich ocean science education
 and public awareness of the oceans and Great
 Lakes.
- 19 (5) Discovery, study, and development of nat-20 ural products from ocean and aquatic systems.

(b) OPERATIONS.—Operation of the extramural regional centers and the National Institute for Undersea
Science and Technology shall leverage partnerships and
cooperative research with academia and private industry.

1 SEC. 206. COMPETITION.

2 (a) DISCRETIONARY FUND.—The program shall allo-3 cate no more than 10 percent of its annual budget to a 4 discretionary fund that may be used only for program ad-5 ministration and priority undersea research projects iden-6 tified by the Director but not covered by funding available 7 from centers.

8 (b) COMPETITIVE SELECTION.—The Administrator 9 shall conduct an initial competition to select the regional 10 centers that will participate in the program 90 days after 11 the publication of the final program direction required in section 204 and every five years thereafter. Funding for 12 13 projects conducted through the regional centers shall be awarded through a competitive, merit-reviewed process on 14 the basis of their relevance to the goals of the program 15 16 and their technical feasibility.

17 SEC. 207. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

18 There are authorized to be appropriated to the Na19 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry
20 out this title—

- 21 (1) \$17,500,000 for fiscal year 2008;
- 22 (2) \$19,500,000 for fiscal year 2009;
- (3) \$21,500,000 for fiscal year 2010;
- 24 (4) \$23,500,000 for fiscal year 2011;
- 25 (5) \$25,500,000 for fiscal year 2012;
- 26 (6) \$27,500,000 for fiscal year 2013; and

(7) \$29,500,000 for fiscal year 2014.
 TITLE III—INTERAGENCY
 PLANNING AND COORDINATION
 sec. 301. OCEAN EXPLORATION AND UNDERSEA RESEARCH
 TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE TASK

TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE TASK FORCE.

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the Na-8 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in coordi-9 nation with the National Science Foundation, the National 10 Aeronautics and Space Administration, the United States Geological Survey, the Department of the Navy, the Min-11 12 eral Management Service, and relevant governmental, 13 non-governmental, academic, industry, and other experts, shall convene an ocean exploration and undersea research 14 15 technology and infrastructure task force to develop and implement a strategy— 16

17 (1) to facilitate transfer of new exploration and
18 undersea research technology to the programs au19 thorized under titles I and II of this Act;

20 (2) to improve availability of communications
21 infrastructure, including satellite capabilities, to
22 such programs;

(3) to develop an integrated, workable, and
comprehensive data management information processing system that will make information on unique

6

1	and significant features obtained by such programs
2	available for research and management purposes;
3	(4) to conduct public outreach activities that
4	improve the public understanding of ocean science,
5	resources, and processes, in conjunction with rel-
6	evant programs of the National Oceanic and Atmos-
7	pheric Administration, the National Science Founda-
8	tion, and other agencies; and
9	(5) to encourage cost-sharing partnerships with
10	governmental and nongovernmental entities that will
11	assist in transferring exploration and undersea re-
12	search technology and technical expertise to the pro-
13	grams.
14	(b) BUDGET COORDINATION.—The task force shall
15	coordinate the development of agency budgets and identify
16	the items in their annual budget that support the activities
17	identified in the strategy developed under subsection (a).
	Passed the House of Representatives February 14,
	2008.

Attest:

Clerk.

110TH CONGRESS H. R. 1834

AN ACT

To authorize the national ocean exploration program and the national undersea research program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.