

June 10, 2025

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) FY2026 Budget Request and Appropriations

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is an agency in the Department of Commerce, which defines its mission as to understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans, and coasts; share that information; and conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources. On March 15, 2025, Congress passed a full-year continuing resolution of discretionary appropriations for NOAA for the remainder of FY2025, and President Trump signed it into law (P.L. 119-4). For FY2026, the Trump Administration is requesting a decrease in funding for NOAA broadly, with terminations to funding for climate-related offices and programs, among other changes. As of early June 2025, typical agency-specific documents associated with budget requests have not been made available for FY2026.

NOAA's work is divided among six line offices: National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS); National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); National Ocean Service (NOS); National Weather Service (NWS); Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR); and Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO). NOAA's Mission Support provides planning, leadership, finances, information technology, educational programming, and other support across the line offices.

Congress typically provides NOAA with annual mandatory and discretionary appropriations. Mandatory appropriations, which generally comprise a small percentage of total NOAA funding, are disbursed to various accounts that support programs in NOS, NMFS, and OMAO. NOAA's discretionary appropriations typically are included in the annual Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations act. Discretionary appropriations support two broad accounts—Operations, Research, and Facilities (ORF) and Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction (PAC)—and a few smaller accounts. Annual appropriations are one part of the agency's discretionary *direct obligations* or funding level, which also include transfers and recoveries from prior year obligations. For more about NOAA's budget structure, see CRS Report R48157, *National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Budget and Funding: Overview and Issues for Congress*.

Agency Funding

NOAA has requested between \$4.7 billion and \$7.2 billion in nominal dollars per year in discretionary direct obligations for ORF and PAC from FY2017 to FY2026 (**Figure 1**). Congress provided between \$5.5 billion and \$6.7 billion in nominal dollars for discretionary direct obligations from FY2017 through FY2024. Congress did not provide a direct obligations amount in law for FY2025. The enacted OAR and PAC direct obligations were above

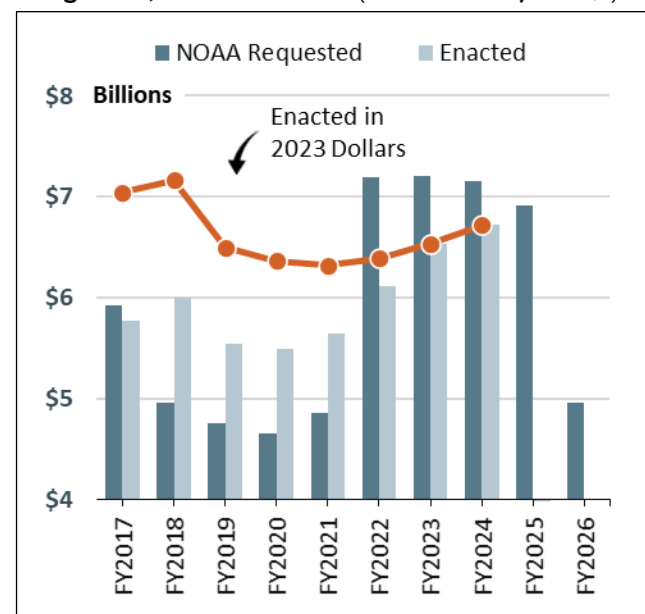
\$7 billion in FY2017 and FY2018, and lower since then, when adjusted for inflation (see orange line in **Figure 1**).

FY2025 Enacted Appropriations

In March 2025, Congress provided the agency a total of \$6.1 billion in appropriations in P.L. 119-4 (and did not provide a direct obligations amount). The law required NOAA to submit a spending plan for the appropriations to the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations; it is unclear if NOAA has submitted such a plan (as one has not been made publicly available).

Congress previously had provided NOAA with additional appropriations, through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA; P.L. 117-58) and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA; P.L. 117-169), to be made available to the agency in FY2025 and FY2026. President Trump issued Executive Order (E.O.) 14154, "Unleashing American Energy" in January 2025, which "pause[d]" the disbursement of funds appropriated through the IIJA and IRA for an unknown amount of time. It is unclear whether the previously appropriated IIJA and IRA funding will be made available to the agency for use in FY2025 and FY2026.

Figure 1. ORF and PAC Annual Discretionary Direct Obligations, FY2017-FY2026 (nominal and adjusted \$s)



Sources: CRS, from NOAA budget justifications, congressional explanatory statements, and *Budget FY2025, Table 10.1, Gross Domestic Product and Deflators Used in the Historical Tables: 1940-2029*.

Notes: See text for abbreviations. Congress did not specify an enacted direct obligations amount for FY2025, thus the figure does

not show an amount. NOAA did receive FY2025 appropriations. Discretionary direct obligations, or funding levels, include annual appropriations, transfers, and recoveries from prior year obligations but exclude any additional appropriations.

FY2026 Budget Request

NOAA has not yet released its FY2026 budget request congressional justification with information about specific programs and funding. Instead, this In Focus refers to an internal Office of Management and Budget NOAA Pre-decisional Passback circulated in April 2025 and to the Trump Administration's FY2026 "skinny" budget request and *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget* released in May 2025. The Passback was authenticated by several news sources (e.g., *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Politico*, *New York Times*).

In its *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget*, the Trump Administration requests nearly \$5 billion for discretionary direct obligations for ORF and PAC in FY2026 (**Figure 1**). Of that, the Administration requests \$4.5 billion in appropriations (a component of discretionary direct obligations). The requested appropriations amount is \$1.6 billion below the FY2025 enacted appropriations amount (\$6.1 billion).

Issues for Congress

The Pre-decisional Passback, FY2026 "skinny" budget request, and Technical Supplement provide limited information regarding requested funding changes across the agency. The Pre-decisional Passback aims to "support a leaner NOAA that focuses on core operational needs, eliminates unnecessary layers of bureaucracy, terminates nonessential grant programs, and ends activities that do not warrant a [f]ederal role." The Passback provides various levels of detail for the proposed changes to the line offices and Mission Support. The "skinny" budget request highlights proposals to terminate climate-focused efforts and changes to the Geostationary Extended Observations (GeoXO) satellite program within NESDIS. Most recently, the Technical Supplement provides information on proposed changes to funding for each line office; the Trump Administration proposes to terminate ORF and PAC funding for OAR and to decrease funding for the other line offices and Mission Support from the FY2025 amounts, with the exception of NWS, which would receive an

increase of \$96 million compared with FY2025 levels (**Figure 2**).

Changes to Research, Data, and Grant Programs

The Pre-decisional Passback would terminate or reduce funding for certain grant programs across NOS, NMFS, OAR, and Mission Support. Remaining OAR programs would be transferred to NOS and NWS. The FY2026 "skinny" budget request proposes to terminate funding for "climate-dominated research, data, and grant programs" and specifically mentions projects supported by the Office of Education in Mission Support and multiple programs within OAR. The Technical Supplement does not discuss how the agency plans to implement statutory authorities and responsibilities most recently fulfilled by these Mission Support and OAR programs.

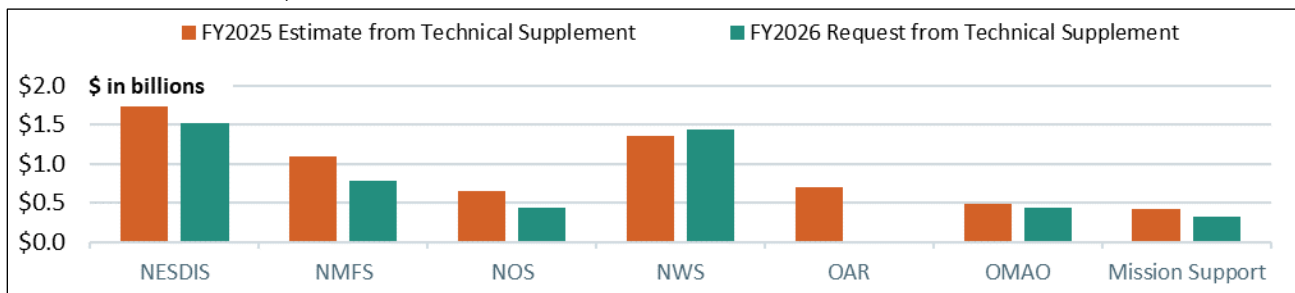
NESDIS Changes

The Pre-decisional Passback proposes decreases for certain offices and programs within NESDIS, such as the National Centers for Environmental Information. It also would maintain planned levels for Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites R Series, polar weather satellites, and the Space Weather Follow-on program and increase funding for the Near Earth Orbit Network. The FY2026 "skinny" budget request proposes to "rescope" NOAA's GeoXO satellite program, including the cancellation of instruments focused on climate measurements. At the same time, the budget request supports "continuing to modernize core weather-monitoring capabilities," although it is unknown what activities may fall under modernization efforts. Lastly, the Technical Supplement proposes to decrease funding for NESDIS but notes that the request "maintains continuity of major systems, including satellites, needed for weather forecasting."

Other Considerations

As Congress determines how much funding to provide the agency and for what activities in FY2026, Members also may consider broader questions related to the possible consequences of the Administration's recent changes to NOAA's staffing and how proposed additional reductions may impact the agency's implementation of its statutory authorities and responsibilities.

Figure 2. NOAA Annual ORF and PAC Discretionary Direct Obligations for Line Offices
(FY2025-FY2026, nominal \$s)



Sources: CRS using Office of Management and Budget, *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget*, May 2025.

Notes: See text for abbreviations. Discretionary direct obligations, or funding levels, include annual appropriations, transfers, and recoveries from prior year obligations but exclude any additional appropriations. Congress did not provide a breakdown of funding per line office within the FY2025 appropriations law (P.L. 119-4), nor did it release an accompanying explanatory statement or congressional report.

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