

**House Natural Resources - Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Subcommittee**  
**May 16, 2024 Oversight Hearing: *President's FY25 Budget Proposal for NOAA***  
**Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Dr. Richard Spinrad**

**Questions from Rep. Hoyle**

1. The Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) budget proposes significant cuts for the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS), which would have severe consequences for my district. I appreciate that developing the President's Budget requires tradeoffs, especially in light of the Fiscal Responsibility Act's requirements. However, I am concerned about potential ripple effects of the proposed budget cuts.

**A. How do you plan to prioritize remaining funds to ensure that critical functions of IOOS are maintained, and what criteria will guide these decisions?**

NOAA Response:

At this funding level, NOAA will prioritize integrating federal, academic, private sector and non-profit ocean data through the IOOS national Data Management and Cyberinfrastructure (DMAC), as well as making that data accessible.

**B. How would the proposed cuts impact both programmatic core funding as well as Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act funding?**

NOAA Response:

The NOS IOOS Budget for Regional Associations (RAs) supports the Regional must-pays for staff at each of the 11 RAs and other operational expenses including rent, travel, training and program management, including grants administration, scientific and technical expertise, ship time, leadership, and stakeholder outreach and engagement. That core function is necessary for the RA's to be able to perform the work already in their scope, as well as the BIL funds and IRA RFA. Given the FY 2025 budget, NOAA will work closely with the IOOS Regional Associations to execute IRA and BIL funds in ways that will alleviate the impacts of these base funding reductions, though it will come at a loss to scope of what we hope to achieve with these funds, including new efforts to expand equitable service delivery as part of the IRA funds.

**C. Can you outline the potential direct and indirect impacts of the proposed cuts to programs, communities, or international partnerships that rely on the data and infrastructure supported by IOOS?**

NOAA Response:

At this time, IOOS RAs would likely discontinue several services, including: High Frequency, Radar Network, Underwater Profiling Glider Network, the Congressionally-mandated National Harmful Algal Bloom Observation Network, the Ocean Technology Transition Program, the Coastal Ocean Modeling Testbed, and the Marine Life Program.

2. *It is my understanding that there have been ongoing issues with new business and awards systems (BAS and eRA Commons) implemented by NOAA last fall which have made NOAA unable to send funding or handle proposals for Cooperative Institutes. For example, the*

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*Cooperative Institute for Marine Ecosystem and Resources at Oregon State University has received no funding since the switchover, cannot process proposals, and is barreling toward a funding cliff this fall. I'm very concerned about the potential impact on researchers in my district and, more broadly, damage to NOAA's partnerships across the country. What is NOAA doing to address this issue, and what are the expectations for getting it resolved?*

NOAA Response:

The Department of Commerce has been operating on legacy financial, property, and procurement systems for over 20 years, and in FY 2024 we modernized our systems by integrating commercial business intelligence tools through the Business Applications Solution (BAS).

The move to BAS is a necessary, but complicated transition that will improve the Department's financial management operations over time. This implementation for the Department's three largest bureaus (NOAA, NIST, and Census) will take several years, and NOAA is the first to implement BAS.

NOAA has encountered several challenges during this transition, but we assure you we are working diligently to resolve challenges as quickly as possible. The funding of Cooperative Institutes such as CIMERS is among our highest priorities as we continue doing our best to release these awards in as timely a manner as possible.

Through NOAA's Grants Management Division (GMD), in FY 2024 CIs have received awards totaling over \$399 million as of September 24, 2024, with \$216 million remaining for prioritization in FY25. GMD has completed three awards for CIMERS totaling over \$4.7 million as of September 24, 2024, with \$405,000 remaining for prioritization in FY25. Any remaining actions associated with projects past their anticipated start are being prioritized.

We cannot overstate the dedication that NOAA's workforce has demonstrated in implementing BAS. Moving to a steady state is a high priority of mine. NOAA continues to work with the Department to validate the data in BAS and issue payments and awards as quickly as possible.

Despite the challenges, we are seeing "normal" levels of processing in the new system. We expect to continue seeing steady, substantial improvements to get to a stable system so that NOAA and our partners can enjoy the benefits of a modern financial system.