

May 19, 2025

Dr. Jorge Brenner, Executive Director
Gulf of America Regional Association of Coastal Ocean Observing System
Department of Oceanography
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Dear Dr. Brenner,

I am writing to express my strong support for the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS), the regional associations it sustains across the country, and GCOOS specifically. We at Woods Hole Group place high value on our collaboration with GCOOS, including contracts with your organization to provide services essential for the Oil & Gas operations in the Gulf of America. Our work together on Quality Assurance and Quality Control of ocean current measurements collected by drilling units in the Gulf, which is one of the most comprehensive oceanographic campaigns ever conceived, helps ensure safe design and operation of offshore production infrastructure. These data also allow industries such as shipping and fishing to operate efficiently, using such information to make safe decisions while saving time and money in benefit of the economy of the Gulf states: Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Florida.

Woods Hole Group is a commercial entity that also appreciates the business we do with GCOOS, which has created and helps sustain jobs at our company for qualified marine professionals. The work we do also employs the services of marine service providers, work vessels, divers, and related services and products in the region. These programs play a vital role in protecting public safety, promoting economic stability, and advancing the long-term stewardship of our ocean and coastal resources.

The proposed elimination of funding for IOOS Regional Observations in the Fiscal Year 2026 President's Budget for NOAA is deeply concerning. GCOOS and the other 10 Regional Associations that comprise IOOS deliver critical data, tools, and services that are not easily replaced and are essential to a wide array of public and private sector operations.

NOAA and IOOS data products are essential, foundational inputs in the analyses, models, and solutions developed by Woods Hole Group. We serve a diverse client base of federal agencies, state and local governments, Oil & Gas stakeholders, ports and maritime businesses, and private coastal developers and landowners. Our work leverages tide gauge, wind, and wave buoy data to quantify flooding, sea state conditions, currents, sediment transport, and coastal erosion to produce representative site characterizations. This work informs coastal management plans, habitat restoration designs, flood mitigation strategies, and design criteria for critical infrastructure (thus reducing its operational risk).

IOOS exemplifies the power of strategic public investment. It strengthens collaboration among federal agencies, academic institutions, industry leaders, and local governments, while delivering measurable economic and societal benefits. Its value extends well beyond data collection. It is an indispensable regional asset that supports maritime commerce, port security, emergency preparedness, fisheries management, and environmental monitoring.



We need more of these data, not less. As a company that relies on IOOS to support jobs and economic development while protecting vulnerable communities and ecosystems, we strongly oppose any effort to defund IOOS Regional Observations. We respectfully urge decision-makers to ensure that regional associations remain a fully supported and sustained component of NOAA's mission.

Please continue your outstanding work. You have our full support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "R.P. Hamilton, Jr.", is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Robert P. Hamilton, Jr.
President