FY 2003 Budget Highlights

NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), also known as "NOAA Research," requests $297.0 million (M) in the research budget activity of Operations, Research and Facilities (ORF) and $10.6M in the Procurement, Acquisitions and Construction (PAC) account. The FY2003 request reflects decrease of $68.2M from the FY2002 enacted level. The request consists of program increases of $29.0M, program decreases of $68.8M (including a transfer of the National Sea Grant Program to the National Science Foundation), terminations of non-requested and one-time programs of $37.3M, a program transfer to the National Weather Service of $2.3M, a retirement funding transfer from the Office of Personnel Management of $6.1M, and inflation adjustments of $5.0M.

FY2003 Program Changes

Base Restorations Initiative: NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) requests $0.9M and four FTE as a permanent restoration of base funding for operational scientific activities that have not received inflationary cost adjustments over a five-year period. This will restore base funding at five NOAA laboratories: $216,000 for the Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory (PMEL) in Seattle, WA, to operate the Tropical Atmosphere Ocean (TAO) array; $210,000 to modernize operational forecasting services at the Space Environment Center (SEC) in Boulder, CO; $125,000 for the operational global air sampling programs for carbon cycle and halocarbon (CFC) gas monitoring at the Climate Monitoring and Diagnostics Laboratory (CMDL) in Boulder; $217,000 for the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML) in Miami, FL, to maintain operation of Global Ocean Observing System; and $175,000 to continue operation of the wind profiler network operated by the Forecast Systems Laboratory (FSL), also located in Boulder. The restoration will support expenses associated with fixed equipment and salary costs affected by multiple years of inflationary erosion.

Adjustments to the Base Budget: A key component of this request is an increase of $5.0M in base adjustments to enable OAR programs to cover the increased costs of pay, benefits, and other expenses. Failure to receive these adjustments in any given year results in program cutbacks that hamper OAR's ability to meet NOAA's research goals.

Climate Change Research Initiative: NOAA requests $18.0M and two FTE in the Climate Observations and Services line item to begin working toward the goals of the Climate Change Research Initiative (CCRI). By announcing the establishment of the CCRI June 11, 2001, President Bush addressed the Administration's commitments to study areas of scientific uncertainty in climate change and address priority areas where investments can make a difference in reducing this uncertainty. The request will support improvement of our predictive and observational capabilities in a number of key areas:

- Climate Modeling Center ($5.0M): to be located within the Geophysical Fluid Dynamics Laboratory to provide a suite of operational climate products to support policy and management decisions.

- Global Climate Observing System ($4.0M): NOAA will work with other nations to help developing countries build global climate observation systems.

- Global Ocean Observing System ($4.0M): NOAA will work with other nations to extend the U.S. portion of Argo floats from 1/3 to 1/2 of the required global array and deploy moored floats in critical locations to monitor indicators of abrupt climate change.

- National Aerosol-Climate Interactions Program ($2.0 M): NOAA will participate in this interagency program by expanding in situ monitoring, aircraft campaigns, and satellite algorithm development for the aerosols sensor planned for NPOESS.

- Carbon Monitoring ($2.0M): to contribute to the North American Carbon Study, an intensive focus on North American land and adjacent ocean carbon sources and sinks. Increased funds will accelerate CO_2 measurements in North America, including vertical sampling.

- Regional Integrated Science Assessments (RISA) ($1.0M): Working with the National Science Foundation, NOAA will augment its capability in assessing climate change impacts vulnerability by using the research on "decision making in the face of uncertainty" in the framework of the RISA programs.

Weather Research: NOAA requests an increase of $1.0M and two FTE for research to improve inland heavy precipitation forecasts associated with landfalling hurricanes through the U.S. Weather Research Program (USWRP).

Energy Security: NOAA requests an increase of $6.1M to improve the accuracy and reliability of forecast models of weather, hydrology, and climate conditions. Improvements to NOAA weather, hydrology, and climate services will increase the accuracy and reliability of forecast and assessment information that will be used, in turn, to increase the efficiency of the energy industry by reducing energy generating costs and minimizing the risks of insufficient energy availability.

Study of Environmental Arctic Change (SEARCH): NOAA requests an increase of $2.0M and two FTE to begin its part of a coordinated interagency and international study that will improve observation of elements of the Arctic environment that could significantly impact national energy budgets, weather, fisheries, and climate on both long and short-term time scales. This responds to recent evidence that the Arctic environment may be in a state of precipitous change that may have far-reaching effects on lower latitudes. Nine Federal agencies have agreed that an intensive interagency effort of observations and analysis is needed to understand the changes in the Arctic.

Phased-Array Radar: NOAA requests $1.0M and two FTE to develop new technologies for forecasting and detecting tornadoes and severe weather and to disseminate this information to managers, the media, and the public. The initiative consists primarily of construction and research support for a phased-array radar test-bed at the National Severe Storms Laboratory (NSSL) in Norman, OK. NSSL will host the test-bed in a partnership between NOAA, the Navy, Federal Aviation Administration, National Science Foundation, and the university community. This will increase understanding of storm evolution, leading to improved computer models, more accurate forecasts, and earlier warnings (extending storm warning lead times from 12 to 22 minutes).

University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System (UNOLS): $2.5M is requested in NOAA's Marine Services line of the program support activity for outsourcing with UNOLS for ships in the Pacific to support long-time series research for Fisheries-Oceanography Coordinated Investigations (FOCI), VENTS, Oregon/Washington Groundfish Habitat, and maintenance of the tsunami moorings in the Gulf of Alaska and Pacific Ocean. This will provide 125 operating days and allow the NOAA ship, Ronald H. Brown, to meet NOAA research needs in the Atlantic Ocean in FY2003.

FY2003 Program Transfers

The Administration proposes to transfer NOAA's **National Sea Grant College Program** to NSF. This is part of a wider Administration effort to promote competitive funding of research. A decrease is requested of $62.41M, of which $57M will be transferred to NSF.

A transfer of $2.3M is proposed for the **Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program** to move the program from OAR to the National Weather Service. The research and development phase of the program has been completed and the program has become operational.

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