

OEAB Elevator Speech Exercise
15 April 2016

NOAA OER is the government entity that explores the ocean. Top to bottom, arctic to equator, we explore everything that is unknown.

I consider ocean exploration, particularly within the vast extended economic zone of the U.S., the 21st century American frontier. The quest to embrace new lands made American great in the 19th century; that quest, now across submerged America, can and must continue.

More than half our planet is covered by oceans that are more than 2 miles deep and mostly unexplored, which is a major concern if we want to understand our home. For example, the oceans provide: the largest contiguous habitat for life (food) on our planet; a vast reservoir for carbon sequestration and storage; important shipping lanes for commerce and natural barriers for defense; and seafloor systems that generate large mineral reserves while simultaneously providing key insights into the origins of life.

NOAA is a world leader in discovering and monitoring the myriad connections between oceanic, terrestrial, and atmospheric systems and their complex interrelationships with all aspects of our society. A better prepared, more resilient, and ultimately more prosperous nation relies on the awareness and environmental intelligence that *exploration* provides. Know your ocean.

NOAA's Ocean Exploration and Research (OER) Program explores the world's oceans to advance our understanding and help our nation make better decisions. OER discovers new knowledge, advances innovative technology, engages international partners, and excites the next generation to enhance our nation's prestige as a maritime power.

Great nations explore, the great maritime nations explore the oceans on which they depend. America is world's greatest maritime nation; its maritime interests are global. It is obliged to first explore the unknown ocean on which it increasingly depends, then measure, and then predict.

Ocean exploration reveals life's origins and discovers forces shaping our earth's future. Only NOAA's national program, based on input from stakeholders in the public and private sectors, can draw together resources from government, research institutions, corporations, and international partners to mount unified expeditions on the scale required and then to share on line, often in live transmission, new insights into the ocean world that surrounds us."

We explore our vast oceans to advance human understanding of marine phenomena and the diverse abundance of marine life. In search of answers to questions (some yet unknown), pioneering ocean explorers capture our imagination and encourage examination of human impacts on the marine environment. At its best, ocean exploration leads to radical breakthroughs in human knowledge and discoveries that enhance the resilience and health of our oceans for the benefit of all life on earth.