

Ocean Exploration Advisory Board
A Federal Advisory Committee Act Board
January 31, 2018

RDML Timothy Gallaudet, USN (ret.)
Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Acting) and
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere

Dear Admiral Gallaudet:

The Ocean Exploration Advisory Board (OEAB) is required by law (33 USC 3405) and by its charter to conduct an annual review of the competitive grant selection process used by the Office of Ocean Exploration and Research (OER) for the quality and effectiveness of the proposal review process established under 33 USC 3403. To that end, OER briefed the OEAB on its annual Federal Funding Opportunity at our January meeting. The OEAB has determined that it is akin to the National Science Foundation peer-review system but adds a pre-proposal step in the process intended to reduce workload on grant applicants, which the OEAB supports. The Board voted unanimously (with one absentee) to endorse the FFO process OER uses.

The OEAB recommends that the OER consider compressing the FFO process between the Phase II and Phase III periods to allow for award selection to be announced sooner in the calendar year. These FFO timing adjustments would also have the added benefit of being aligned with other agency (e.g. NASA) proposal processes and could create opportunities for partnerships and leveraging.

The OEAB further recommends that OER conduct an evaluation of the extent to which the need to include ship time costs within responses to the FFO might impact the ranking and success of proposals.

Sincerely,



John Kreider
Chair