

**TITLE XII—OCEANS****Subtitle A—Ocean Exploration****PART I—EXPLORATION****SEC. 12001. PURPOSE.**

33 USC 3401.

The purpose of this part is to establish the national ocean exploration program and the national undersea research program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

**SEC. 12002. PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.**

33 USC 3402.

The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall, in consultation with the National Science Foundation and other appropriate Federal agencies, establish a coordinated national ocean exploration program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that promotes collaboration with other Federal ocean and undersea research and exploration programs. To the extent appropriate, the Administrator shall seek to facilitate coordination of data and information management systems, outreach and education programs to improve public understanding of ocean and coastal resources, and development and transfer of technologies to facilitate ocean and undersea research and exploration.

**SEC. 12003. POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE ADMINISTRATOR.**

33 USC 3403.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the program authorized by section 12002, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall—

(1) conduct interdisciplinary voyages or other scientific activities in conjunction with other Federal agencies or academic or educational institutions, to explore and survey little known areas of the marine environment, inventory, observe, and assess living and nonliving marine resources, and report such findings;

(2) give priority attention to deep ocean regions, with a focus on deep water marine systems that hold potential for important scientific discoveries, such as hydrothermal vent communities and seamounts;

(3) conduct scientific voyages to locate, define, and document historic shipwrecks, submerged sites, and other ocean exploration activities that combine archaeology and oceanographic sciences;

(4) develop and implement, in consultation with the National Science Foundation, a transparent, competitive process for merit-based peer-review and approval of proposals for activities to be conducted under this program, taking into consideration advice of the Board established under section 12005;

(5) enhance the technical capability of the United States marine science community by promoting the development of improved oceanographic research, communication, navigation, and data collection systems, as well as underwater platforms and sensor and autonomous vehicles; and

(6) establish an ocean exploration forum to encourage partnerships and promote communication among experts and other

stakeholders in order to enhance the scientific and technical expertise and relevance of the national program.

(b) DONATIONS.—The Administrator may accept donations of property, data, and equipment to be applied for the purpose of exploring the oceans or increasing knowledge of the oceans.

33 USC 3404.

**SEC. 12004. OCEAN EXPLORATION AND UNDERSEA RESEARCH TECHNOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE TASK FORCE.**

Establishment.  
Strategic plan.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in coordination with the National Science Foundation, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the United States Geological Survey, the Department of the Navy, the Mineral Management Service, and relevant governmental, non-governmental, academic, industry, and other experts, shall convene an ocean exploration and undersea research technology and infrastructure task force to develop and implement a strategy—

(1) to facilitate transfer of new exploration and undersea research technology to the programs authorized under this part and part II of this subtitle;

(2) to improve availability of communications infrastructure, including satellite capabilities, to such programs;

(3) to develop an integrated, workable, and comprehensive data management information processing system that will make information on unique and significant features obtained by such programs available for research and management purposes;

(4) to conduct public outreach activities that improve the public understanding of ocean science, resources, and processes, in conjunction with relevant programs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Science Foundation, and other agencies; and

(5) to encourage cost-sharing partnerships with governmental and nongovernmental entities that will assist in transferring exploration and undersea research technology and technical expertise to the programs.

(b) BUDGET COORDINATION.—The task force shall coordinate the development of agency budgets and identify the items in their annual budget that support the activities identified in the strategy developed under subsection (a).

33 USC 3405.

**SEC. 12005. OCEAN EXPLORATION ADVISORY BOARD.**

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall appoint an Ocean Exploration Advisory Board composed of experts in relevant fields—

(1) to advise the Administrator on priority areas for survey and discovery;

(2) to assist the program in the development of a 5-year strategic plan for the fields of ocean, marine, and Great Lakes science, exploration, and discovery;

(3) to annually review the quality and effectiveness of the proposal review process established under section 12003(a)(4); and

(4) to provide other assistance and advice as requested by the Administrator.

(b) FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—Section 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Board appointed under subsection (a).

(c) APPLICATION WITH OUTER CONTINENTAL SHELF LANDS ACT.—Nothing in part supersedes, or limits the authority of the Secretary of the Interior under the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (43 U.S.C. 1331 et seq.).

**SEC. 12006. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

33 USC 3406.

There are authorized to be appropriated to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to carry out this part—

- (1) \$33,550,000 for fiscal year 2009;
- (2) \$36,905,000 for fiscal year 2010;
- (3) \$40,596,000 for fiscal year 2011;
- (4) \$44,655,000 for fiscal year 2012;
- (5) \$49,121,000 for fiscal year 2013;
- (6) \$54,033,000 for fiscal year 2014; and
- (7) \$59,436,000 for fiscal year 2015.

**~~PART II NOAA UNDERSEA RESEARCH  
PROGRAM ACT OF 2009~~**

NOAA Undersea  
Research  
Program Act  
of 2009.  
33 USC 3401  
note.

**~~SEC. 12101. SHORT TITLE.~~**

~~This part may be cited as the “NOAA Undersea Research Program Act of 2009”.~~

**~~SEC. 12102. PROGRAM ESTABLISHED.~~**

33 USC 3421.

~~(a) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall establish and maintain an undersea research program and shall designate a Director of that program.~~

~~(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program is to increase scientific knowledge essential for the informed management, use, and preservation of oceanic, marine, and coastal areas and the Great Lakes.~~

**~~SEC. 12103. POWERS OF PROGRAM DIRECTOR.~~**

33 USC 3422.

~~The Director of the program, in carrying out the program, shall—~~

~~(1) cooperate with institutions of higher education and other educational marine and ocean science organizations, and shall make available undersea research facilities, equipment, technologies, information, and expertise to support undersea research efforts by these organizations;~~

~~(2) enter into partnerships, as appropriate and using existing authorities, with the private sector to achieve the goals of the program and to promote technological advancement of the marine industry; and~~

~~(3) coordinate the development of agency budgets and identify the items in their annual budget that support the activities described in paragraphs (1) and (2).~~

**~~SEC. 12104. ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE.~~**

33 USC 3423.

~~(a) IN GENERAL.—The program shall be conducted through a national headquarters, a network of extramural regional undersea research centers that represent all relevant National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration regions, and the National Institute for Undersea Science and Technology.~~

~~(b) DIRECTION.—The Director shall develop the overall direction of the program in coordination with a Council of Center Directors comprised of the directors of the extramural regional centers and~~

Deadlines.  
Federal Register,  
publication.  
Public comment.