



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): FY2019 Budget Request and Appropriations

The mission of the Department of Commerce (DOC) National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is to understand and predict changes in weather, climate, oceans, and coasts; to share that information with others; and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources. NOAA’s work is divided among six line offices: National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS); National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); National Ocean Service (NOS); National Weather Service (NWS); Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR); and Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO). NOAA also has an overall Mission Support function.

Congress generally funds NOAA in the annual Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations act. Congress provides NOAA with discretionary and mandatory appropriations. Discretionary appropriations support two broad categories of spending—operations, research, and facilities (ORF) and procurement, acquisition, and construction (PAC)—as well as a variety of fisheries funds. Mandatory appropriations are generally a small percentage of total NOAA appropriations and are disbursed to a variety of funds, such as fisheries programs and NOAA Corps Commissioned Officers benefits. This CRS product examines ORF and PAC discretionary funding for FY2019 and potential issues for Congress, such as issues related to grant programs, the agency’s plans for future weather and environmental satellites, and its policies regarding space commerce.

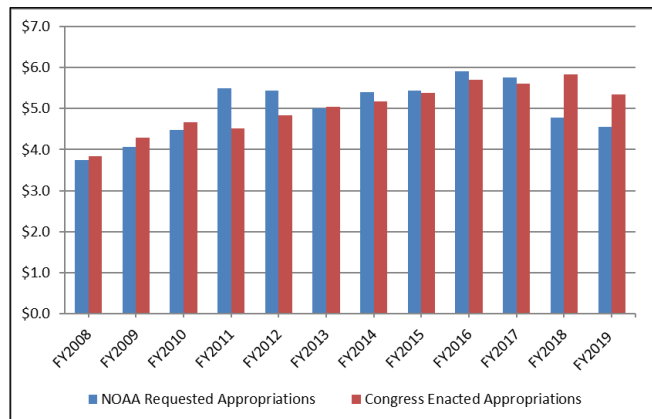
FY2019 Funding

The Administration requested a total of \$4.75 billion in discretionary direct obligations for ORF and PAC for FY2019, including \$4.56 billion in new appropriations. (See the notes to **Table 1** for a description of direct obligations and new appropriations.) House and Senate committees each reported a FY2019 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill (H.R. 5952 and S. 3072), but neither received floor consideration prior to the end of the 115th Congress. Both bills would have provided more funding in direct obligations to NOAA than it requested for FY2019 but less than the FY2018 enacted amount (\$6.00 billion).

After several continuing resolutions and an agency shutdown, Congress enacted P.L. 116-6, which provides \$5.54 billion in direct obligations and \$5.35 billion in new appropriations to the agency for FY2019. Both enacted direct obligations and enacted appropriations for NOAA ORF and PAC have generally increased since FY2008 (appropriations shown in **Figure 1**). Since FY2008, the PAC subaccount has fluctuated between 22% and 32% of

total enacted direct obligation levels, with the ORF subaccount comprising the remainder of the total funding (68%-78%).

Figure 1. NOAA ORF and PAC Requested and Enacted Appropriations, FY2008-FY2019
(nominal \$ in billions)



Source: Congressional Research Service, from NOAA budget justifications and congressional explanatory statements.

Note: Amounts do not include supplemental appropriations, rescissions, or sequestration.

Issues for Congress

According to NOAA’s FY2019 budget justification, the FY2019 budget prioritized core government functions and supported the Administration’s priorities to “reduce the impacts of severe weather and water events and increase the sustainable contributions of [U.S.] fishery and ocean resources.”

Proposed Program Funding Changes

For FY2019, the Administration proposed increases to 21 subactivities totaling over \$55 million. It also proposed the reduction or elimination of 65 subactivities totaling over \$1 billion. Proposed reductions or eliminations to subactivity grants, subsidies, and contributions (GSC) budget line items totaled more than \$340 million between the FY2019 base level and the FY2019 budget request (**Table 1**). The GSC budget line provides funding to nonfederal entities, such as states, universities, and the private sector, through grants and competitive research opportunities. Activities proposed for termination included NMFS Prescott Marine Mammal Rescue Assistance grants, NOS Coastal Zone Management grants, NWS National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program grants, OAR’s National Sea Grant College Program, and the Educational Partnership Program for Minority Serving Institutions program under Mission Support.

Table 1. NOAA FY2019 Requested, Considered, and Enacted Direct Obligation and New Appropriation Levels
(\$ in millions)

Line Offices	FY2018 Enacted ^a	FY2019 Base ^b	Requested GSC to be Eliminated ^c	Other	FY2019 Budget Request	H.R. 5952 (House- reported)	S. 3072 (Senate- reported)	FY2019 Enacted
				Requested Eliminations or Reductions				
NESDIS	\$2,100	\$2,191	\$0	\$551	\$1,640	\$1,662	\$1,743	\$1,700
NMFS	\$883	\$856	\$19	\$26	\$810	\$875	\$925	\$909
NOS	\$565	\$523	\$139	\$2	\$382	\$558	\$588	\$585
NWS	\$1,157	\$1,128	\$14	\$62	\$1,053	\$1,143	\$1,161	\$1,163
OAR	\$549	\$514	\$150	\$42	\$322	\$503	\$549	\$566
OMAO	\$458	\$299	\$0	\$0 ^d	\$304	\$249	\$327	\$326
Mission Support	\$290	\$276	\$18	\$14	\$245	\$276	\$300	\$292
Total Direct Obligations^e	\$6,001	\$5,787	\$340	\$697	\$4,755	\$5,266	\$5,594	\$5,540
Total New Appropriations^f	\$5,827	\$5,593	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	\$4,561	\$5,075	\$5,406	\$5,352

Sources: CRS from NOAA *Budget Estimates Fiscal Year 2019*; explanatory statement for P.L. 115-141; H.Rept. 115-704; S.Rept. 115-275; and H.Rept. 116-9.

Notes: ORF: operations, research, and facilities; PAC: procurement, acquisition, and construction; GSC: grants, subsidies, and contributions.

- Enacted amounts do not include supplemental appropriations.
- NOAA *Budget Estimates Fiscal Year 2019* estimated FY2019 expenses using the FY2018 Annualized Continuing Resolution and expected adjustments.
- The amounts reflect requested changes greater than 5% of a Program, Project, and Activity (PPA), new starts, or terminations. Requested changes less than 5% of the PPA are not included in the amounts shown.
- The Administration proposed a \$4.90 million increase from the FY2019 base to the OMAO line office.
- Amounts may not add up to total due to rounding. "Total Direct Obligations," or total program or funding level, includes direct new appropriations, transfers from NOAA funds, and recoveries of canceled prior-year obligations.
- Amounts may not add up to total due to rounding. "Total New Appropriations" includes the enacted or requested appropriation dollars for the fiscal year and does not include recoveries of canceled prior-year obligations, transfers from other NOAA accounts, or supplemental appropriations.

Planned decreases to two satellite programs accounted for more than \$550 million of the remaining \$697 million in proposed reductions. The remaining proposed reductions and eliminations were related to stand-alone or GSC-associated budget line items such as purchases, full-time employees, travel, and other program adjustments (Table 1). Similar changes had been proposed in NOAA's FY2018 budget request. P.L. 116-6, as described by H.Rept. 116-9, does not include the Administration's proposed GSC eliminations and reductions.

Future Satellite Funding

NOAA provides global weather and environmental data from satellites, such as the Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS), Polar Follow-On (PFO), Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite (GOES), and other remote sensing technologies, to other federal agencies, the public, and the private sector. Congress has previously raised questions about NOAA's satellite programs, particularly JPSS, regarding data continuity, program management, and budget. The FY2019 request would have merged JPSS and PFO into a new program, Polar Weather Satellites (PWS), and would have funded continued development and work on JPSS and the next generation of GOES satellites. P.L. 116-6, as described in H.Rept. 116-9, provides separate

funding for JPSS and PFO, but encourages NOAA "to provide the Committees ... a revised proposal that clearly identifies the cost and programmatic efficiencies that would be gained by combining these programs." H.Rept. 116-9 also notes specific funding for GOES, but does not respond to other FY2019 requested GOES-related changes.

Space Commerce

Together with other agencies, DOC regulates and promotes the commercial space sector, including commercial remote sensing satellites. The 115th Congress held hearings on NOAA's involvement in space commerce. NOAA currently houses the Commercial Remote Sensing Regulatory Affairs Office (CRSRA) and Office of Space Commerce (OSC). P.L. 116-6, as described in H.Rept. 116-9, meets the Administration's funding request for CRSRA and OSC. H.Rept. 116-9 also directs DOC "to fully utilize its current offices and authorities to encourage the commercial use of space," until the Administration's proposed Bureau of Space Commerce is established in law.

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