



H.R. 1834 – To authorize the national ocean exploration program and the national undersea research program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 1834 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Jim Saxton (R-NJ) on March 29, 2007. The resolution was referred to the House Committee on Science and Technology on March 29, 2007, and was reported by the committee as amended on December 18, 2007.

H.R. 1834 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on February 13, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.R. 1834 requires the Secretary of Commerce to conduct a coordinated national ocean exploration program through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) that promotes collaboration with existing NOAA programs.

The bill requires the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to conduct an undersea research program to increase scientific knowledge regarding the management, use, and preservation of oceanic, coastal, and large lake resources. The bill requires that the program be conducted through a national headquarters, a network of extramural regional undersea research centers representing all NOAA regions, and a national technology institute. Additionally, H.R. 1834 specifies that research, exploration, education, and technology programs must be conducted through the National Institute for Undersea Science and Technology.

The legislation stipulates that, except for a small discretionary fund for rapid response activities, external projects supported by the regional centers be managed using an open and competitive process.

The bill authorizes the NOAA, the National Science Foundation (NSF), the Department of the Navy, and other federal agencies involved in programs under H.R. 1834 to participate in interagency financing and share, transfer, receive, and spend funds appropriated to any federal participant in the program.

BACKGROUND

The NOAA was formed October 3, 1970 by President Richard Nixon for the purposes of studying the environment, weather, and marine life. The NOAA combined the United States Coastal and Geodetic Survey, the Weather Bureau, and the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries, which are three of the oldest existing agencies in the federal government.

The NOAA works through six major organizations: the National Weather Service, the National Ocean Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service, the NOAA Research division, and the NOAA Program, Planning, and Integration Division. Additionally, NOAA research and operational activities are supported by the NOAA Corps, which is a uniformed service of the NOAA commissioned to operate NOAA ships and aircraft and serve in scientific and administrative posts.



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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COST

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that implementing H.R. 1834 would cost \$30 million in 2008 and \$260 million over the 2008-2012 period. CBO estimates that about \$200 million would be spent after 2012, including nearly \$160 million authorized to be appropriated after 2012. Enacting the bill would not affect direct spending or revenues.

STAFF CONTACT

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