



H.R. 4174 – FEDERAL OCEAN ACIDIFICATION RESEARCH AND MONITORING ACT OF 2007

FLOOR SITUATION

H.R. 4174 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 Thomas Allen (D-ME) on November 14, 2007. The House Committee on Science and Technology agreed to the bill by voice vote, as amended, on June 25, 2008.

H.R. 4174 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on July 9, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.R. 4174 requires the Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology of the National Science and Technology Council to: 1) develop a strategic research plan to guide Federal research on ocean acidification and oversee the implementation of this plan; 2) develop assessments of the potential impacts of ocean acidification on marine organisms and ecosystems and strategies to curb any negative effects; 3) coordinate outreach opportunities and communication between nongovernmental organizations and any persons that have an interest in marine resources; 4) coordinate U.S. Federal research on ocean acidification with any research performed by other nations; and 5) establish an Ocean Acidification Information Exchange to make information on ocean acidification research available electronically to the government and interested private organizations.

The bill requires that the Subcommittee report to Congress within one year of this bill's enactment detailing research initiatives and progress made. Additionally, H.R. 4174 requires the Subcommittee to submit a strategic research plan within two years of enactment. The Subcommittee is to consult with academic, state, industry and nongovernmental environmental organizations when developing this plan and Secretary of Commerce is required to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to review the plan.

Under the legislation, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the National Science Foundation (NSF), and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) are to conduct research and develop programs for the monitoring of ocean acidification which are consistent with the purposes and goals of the strategic research plan required of the Subcommittee.

H.R. 4174 authorizes funds for the NOAA in the following amounts: \$8 million for 2009; \$12 million for 2010; \$15 million for 2011; and \$20 million for 2012. Additionally, the bill authorizes funds for the NSF in the following amounts: \$6 million for 2009; \$8 million for 2010; \$12 million for 2011; and \$15 million for 2012.

BACKGROUND

According to the [NOAA](#), ocean acidification is the increase in an ocean's acidity levels and changes that occur to the general chemical make-up of ocean water caused by chemical inputs (such as carbon dioxide) from the atmosphere. The ocean naturally absorbs excess carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and changes that occur to the normal amount of absorption has a negative impact on marine life, such as coral and other ocean life.

The National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) is an organization within the Department of Commerce. The NSTC established the Joint Subcommittee on Oceans in 2003, which was expanded to include Science and Technology in 2005. The purposes of the Subcommittee include identifying national



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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ocean science and technology priorities and to facilitate use of ocean science and technology in the development of coastal and marine policies.

There are current projects in place to monitor ocean acidification. The NOAA has worked in cooperation with the NSF to monitor ocean acidification by launching buoy into the Gulf of Alaska to measure the air-sea exchange of carbon dioxide in addition to the acidity of the ocean water, specifically the annual levels found in the northern Pacific Ocean. The Gulf of Alaska was chosen as the site for this project because it would be the first global region to be affected by ocean acidification. The buoy is constantly streaming data via satellite. This project is the first system specifically designed to monitor ocean acidification.

[NSTC Joint Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology website](#)

COST

The Congressional Budget Office did not have a cost estimate available for H.R. 4174 as of July 8, 2008.

STAFF CONTACT

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