



August 10, 2010

The Honorable Jane Lubchenco, Administrator  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
14<sup>th</sup> Street & Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Dr. Lubchenco:

On behalf of the Science Advisory Board (SAB), I am pleased to provide comments on the draft NOAA Next Generation Strategic Plan. The SAB provided comments on an earlier version of the Plan. For this public comments version, we reached out to our expert working groups for input in addition to our own. The working groups took this charge very seriously and spent considerable time discussing opportunities to improve the Strategic Plan and provided these to the Board. We discussed their comments in a recent teleconference meeting on August 4, 2010. Overall, our members and working groups had positive comments on the draft Plan. The consensus among the Board members and working groups is that the document is generally written very well and clearly; the length of the Plan is about right; and the overall content is very good but would benefit from some refinements.

Please find attached comments on the NOAA Next Generation Strategic Plan by seven working groups of the Science Advisory Board: Climate; Data Archive and Access Requirements; Ecosystem Sciences and Management; Environmental Information Services; Extension, Outreach, and Education; Oceans and Health; and Social Sciences. In addition to these comments, the SAB highlights three focus areas for strengthening the next version of the Plan: leadership, service, and partnerships.

#### Leadership

Over the years, and in particular this year with the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the Nation has looked to NOAA for leadership on a range of environmental, science and stewardship issues. Some who commented were concerned that the tone of the document is too passive in this respect; that it seems NOAA is reacting to issues rather than leading the efforts to respond to and identify options to address key issues and problems in our society. We recommend that NOAA consider adjusting some of the language in the Plan to adopt a more proactive tone to make it clear that NOAA intends to lead national efforts in its mission areas.

#### Service

Another theme in our comments is a focus on the importance of NOAA's service role, which does not come through strongly in the Plan. In addition to what NOAA already provides in its products and services, there is a strong role of working with appropriate partners in translating NOAA science results into information that can be easily digested by various stakeholders and helping them understand and apply that information. We recommend that the service role to stakeholders and their engagement be more clearly delineated in the NOAA strategic plan. While the strategic plan acknowledges NOAA's commitment to the many communities it serves, it does not sufficiently address how stakeholder input will be obtained or incorporated into NOAA activities.

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While we here emphasize NOAA's role as a service agency, this is not meant to de-emphasize or diminish in any way its research and science roles and expertise. Rather it is because of NOAA's science expertise that it has the obligation to use that knowledge to serve society. We recommend that NOAA consider where some language can be added or modified to emphasize the service role of NOAA and bring this to the same level that the Next Generation Strategic Plan places on science and research.

#### Partnerships

While there is mention of partnerships in the current draft, it appears at the end of the document. For that reason, it reads as if it is almost as an afterthought. Working through partnerships with government agencies at the federal, state and local levels; academia, industry, community organizations and others is critical to achieving NOAA's goals. However, this reality does not come through strongly and clearly in the document. There are some detailed suggestions in the working group comments to highlight the importance of partnerships and we offer these for consideration

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments to the Next Generation Strategic Plan. We applaud NOAA's efforts to develop this Plan and believe it represents a significant step forward in the way that the agency views itself and will function in this new century.

Sincerely,



**Raymond J. Ban**  
**Chair, NOAA Science Advisory Board**  
**Consultant, Weather Industry & Government Partnerships**

Enclosure

cc: Mary Glackin  
Paul Sandifer  
Paul Doremus  
Cynthia Decker  
SAB members  
Working Group Chairs and Co-Chairs