

April 12, 2013

The Honorable Kathryn Sullivan
Acting Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Herbert C. Hoover Building, Room 6811
14th Street & Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Dr. Sullivan:

On behalf of the NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB), I am pleased to transmit to you the final report from the SAB review of the NOAA research and development portfolio. NOAA requested this review and the SAB established a portfolio review task force (PRTF) in February 2012 to conduct the review with a goal to provide preliminary results by November 2012 and a final report by Spring 2013.

Given the short timeframe for the review, the PRTF focused its attention on two major questions in its Terms of Reference:

- What portfolio of R&D activities does NOAA need to achieve its vision and strategic goals, as described in the agency's Next Generation Strategic Plan
- How should NOAA's R&D portfolio be organized and managed to achieve this vision and strategic goals?

The task force presented a preliminary draft report to the SAB in November 2012 and made revisions based on comments received at the meeting. Public comments were requested on the revised draft report and, based on these comments; changes were made to the report. The final report was presented to the SAB at the March 2013 SAB meeting.

The task force found that NOAA conducts world-class research and development that is critical to the Nation's security, economic growth and environmental health. The importance of this research and development will expand in the future as coastal and ocean resources and weather and climate information become even more strategically important to the economy and as American lives, property, and critical infrastructure are exposed increasingly to the impacts of changing climate and coastal conditions. However given today's fiscal realities, NOAA now requires an R&D portfolio that is focused more sharply on those key areas essential to supporting its services to the Nation. The task force also found that NOAA can continue to meet its service and stewardship mandates only if it significantly changes the management of its R&D portfolio. The specific recommendations in the report are:

1. The PRTF recommends that, in addition to its core strengths, NOAA needs greater capacity in the socioeconomic and integrated ecosystem sciences.
2. The PRTF recommends that NOAA should emphasize, highlight, and provide incentives to support the seamless integration of research and services in both its Research to Operations (R2O) and Operations to Research (O2R) enterprises.
3. The PRTF recommends that the SAB, in partnership with NOAA, form a special scientific task force to review existing observing capabilities, examine options for more cost-effective observation and data sharing strategies, and discuss evolving needs and sustainable approaches for new observations and technologies.
4. The PRTF recommends that the responsibilities and authority of the current Chief Scientist position be significantly enhanced to provide the necessary tools to ensure that

the total R&D effort of NOAA is efficiently implemented and aligned with NOAA's strategic priorities. This will require budget authority so that resources can be effectively and efficiently matched to priorities.

5. The PRTF recommends that NOAA maintain a strong and productive internal scientific staff in its laboratories and centers.
6. The PRTF recommends that NOAA assess the Cooperative Institutes in terms of their scientific focus, funding and staffing levels to insure that the CIs have sufficient support to adequately leverage NOAA's investment and that they are aligned with strategic priorities.
7. The PRTF recommends that NOAA should critically examine its distribution of R&D funds and allocation of scientific staff within the agency to better align with the Next Generation Strategic Plan.
8. The PRTF recommends that NOAA capitalize on the support and skills of the extramural research community by developing carefully targeted initiatives that meet the needs of the Next Generation Strategic plan, that are stable and consistent over time to enable year to year planning, and that ensure the results are integrated into NOAA's R&D operations.
9. The PRTF recommends that in the current Federal budget situation, it is imperative that NOAA make the most of its existing talent and find ways to accelerate and enhance learning and professional development of that talent.
10. The PRTF recommends that NOAA work closely with the Department of Commerce, the Office of Management and Budget, and with the Congress to create ways to manage its R&D funds more flexibly and efficiently and to implement its new research priorities over a period of several years.

The Task Force suggested that work toward addressing the management and organization recommendations (4-10) begin immediately, recognizing that many will take time to address and implement. The recommended timing for full implementation of these changes is by September 30, 2015.

Please let me know if you have any questions, comments or concerns.

Sincerely,



Raymond J. Ban
Chair, NOAA Science Advisory Board
Managing Director, Ban & Associates, LLC

Attachment

cc:

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