



FY 2006-07 NAML Federal Public Policy Agenda

The National Association of Marine Laboratories (NAML) is a nonprofit organization of over 120 member institutions representing coastal, marine, and Great Lakes laboratories in every coastal state, stretching from Guam to Bermuda and Alaska to Puerto Rico. Members serve as unique "windows on the sea," providing information on the rich environmental mosaic of coastal habitats as well as offshore oceanic regions and the Great Lakes. NAML member laboratories conduct research and provide a variety of academic, education and public service programs to enable local and regional communities to better understand and manage the ocean, coastal and Great Lake environments. NAML is comprised of three regional associations:

The Northeastern Association of Marine and Great Lakes Laboratories (NEAMGLL) covers institutions located on the Great Lakes as well as the eastern seaboard north of Maryland;

The Southern Association of Marine Laboratories (SAML) includes laboratories from Maryland to Texas, Bermuda and the U.S. Virgin Islands; and

The Western Association of Marine Laboratories (WAML) encompasses laboratories on the west coast, Hawaii and the U.S. Pacific Islands.

NAML Public Policy Goals

The member institutions of the National Association of Marine Labs (NAML) work together to improve the quality and effectiveness of ocean, coastal and Great Lakes research, education and outreach. Through these unique national and regional networks, NAML encourages ecosystem-based management, wise local land management and the understanding and protection of natural resources. In particular, NAML seeks to:

Promote and support basic and applied research of the highest quality from the unique perspective of coastal laboratories.

Encourage wise utilization and conservation of marine and coastal habitats and resources using ecosystem-based management approaches.

Recognize, encourage and support the unique role that coastal laboratories play in conducting education, outreach, and public service.

Promote the efficient exchange of information, constructive cooperation, and productive coordination among NAML member institutions and across regional associations.

Facilitate and coordinate the exchange of information and utilization of expertise between NAML member institutions and government agencies.

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NAML has identified several issues important to the long term health of the Nation's oceans, coasts and Great Lakes. These issues comprise the *FY 2006-07 NAML Federal Public Policy Agenda*:

Support Implementation of U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy Recommendations – NAML strongly supports and endorses the recommendations made by the U.S. Commission on Ocean

Policy. The Commission's analysis of policies governing oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes has resulted in a collection of bold and broad-reaching recommendations for reform. Implementation of these recommendations by the Federal government will enable the U.S. to maintain and strengthen its role as a world leader in protecting and sustaining the planet's oceans, coasts, and Great Lakes.

NAML is particularly supportive of the Commission's recommendation to re-align NOAA's functions to support ecosystem-based management approaches. In addition, we fully endorse the Commission's recommendations to double the federal investment in ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes research as well as its recommendation to promote a strong federal investment in ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes education, outreach, and stewardship. The Commission's recommendations are important first steps in addressing the nation's ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes needs. NAML is supportive of the initial steps taken by the Administration in response to the Commission's report – including the creation of Committee on Ocean Policy established in December 2004 by Executive Order. NAML is committed to working with those at the federal, state, and local levels to ensure full implementation of the Commission's thoughtful recommendations.

Increase Support for the National Science Foundation – NAML supports increased federal funding for the National Science Foundation (NSF) consistent with the National Science Foundation Authorization Act of 2002. NAML supports recent proposals to triple the nation's research and innovation budget over the next 10 years. Basic research and the transfer and use of the knowledge developed through the conduct of research are vital for the long term economic competitiveness and national security of this Nation.

Revitalize the Ocean, Coastal and Great Lakes Research Infrastructure – Currently, funds are inadequate in providing sufficient support for basic laboratory facilities, instrumentation, support systems, computing and related cyberinfrastructure, and ship access. The final report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy makes several recommendations on the need to develop and enhance the national ocean and coastal infrastructure. These recommendations include the creation, by Congress, of a mechanism that ensures a “dedicated funding stream for critical ocean science infrastructure and technology needs.” NAML endorses the Commission's call for doubling the federal investment in ocean, coastal and Great Lakes research to meet growing research and education missions.

In particular, we support a renewed investment in Biological Field Stations and Marine Laboratories (FSMLs) and the NSF Major Research Instrumentation (MRI) Program and the creation of similar kinds of infrastructure support for marine labs in other agencies. This is essential for sustaining the infrastructure that NAML member institutions require in order to achieve their goals. FSMLs, and the instrumentation and other infrastructure which they provide, are vital to biological and marine studies and must be sustained at the highest possible level.

Integrated Ocean Observing Systems – Integrated observations offer critical information on coastal processes necessary for addressing issues, such as the health of humans and marine life, weather and climate nowcasts and forecasts, homeland security, and resource management. Coastal and marine laboratories have been addressing this need, however, for many years funding has been difficult to sustain. Although efforts have been made in the past to coordinate Federal agencies involved in ocean and coastal research and national and international programs regarding coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes observing systems, further investment and strengthened cooperation at all levels is still needed to ensure that these systems are sustained and that they incorporate the long-term monitoring efforts of the nation's coastal and marine laboratories. NAML enthusiastically supports the recommendations made by the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy to develop a sustained integrated ocean observing systems.

To aid in this development, NAML member laboratories, through its unique partnerships, are actively serving as an interface between existing NSF observing networks and programs, such as the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON), the Ocean Observatories Initiative (OOI)

and the Collaborative Large-scale Engineering Analysis Network for Environmental Research (CLEANER). NAML urges the Executive Branch and the Congress to make the ocean observing systems a high priority in FY 2006 and beyond.

Ocean, Coastal and Great Lakes Science Education (are we talking about K-12, undergrad, and/or grad levels of education?) and Outreach – A strong national ocean policy can only be sustained through the development of high-quality coastal, ocean, and Great Lakes education programs that support learning at all age levels and by all disciplines. Through such efforts NAML will be able to highlight the relevance and utility of coastal, ocean and Great Lakes resources and demonstrate the value of and increase the use of incorporating science-based decisions in a public policy process designed to protect and enhance these resources.

For many years, the need for scientists to work with educators to enhance the general public's understanding of ocean science has been recognized as an important priority. The NSF Centers for Ocean Science Education Excellence program (COSEE) help to address these concerns. This network of centers provides a rich environment for which collaborations and partnerships flourish. A greater understanding of the oceans and coastal ecosystems will instill in our populace a sense of stewardship for these important environments.

NAML also applauds the efforts of the House and Senate (check this) Appropriations Committees to consolidate all the different NOAA education programs into a single NOAA Office of Education. This will better enable the community to work with NOAA to strengthen its education and outreach programs.

It is also vitally important that education programs yield a diverse workforce that includes a significant percentage from underrepresented groups. Preparing these cultural bridges would allow us to capitalize upon diverse national strengths, ensuring the flow of intellectual talent into ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes-related fields.

Restructure NOAA to Better Engage Academic University Science and Education Through Competitive Grants – High-quality academic university ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes science and education programs rely heavily on support from competitive merit-based research and education grants. Support for programs and centers within NOAA like the National Sea Grant Program, National Ocean Service, Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, NOAA's Undersea Research Center, Ocean Exploration Initiative, the National Center for Coasts and Oceans and NOAA's joint and cooperative institutes programs need to be expanded and made accessible to the entire ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes research community. NAML intends to continue to support and encourage the expansion of efforts by NOAA to increase its partnerships with ocean, coastal and Great Lakes research institutions.

Strengthen Partnerships Between Marine Laboratories and Federal Agencies – Strong coordination and expanded cooperative activities between marine laboratories and federal funding agencies is necessary for the success of a given research program or center. In order to maximize the effectiveness of a national ocean policy, a collaborative effort is needed between laboratories and federal ocean-related agencies like NSF, NOAA, NASA, and EPA. NAML applauds this Administration's efforts to improve interagency coordination and cooperation with respect to ocean, coastal and Great Lakes issues through the interagency Committee on Ocean Policy and other interagency committees and working groups under the auspices of the Office of Science and Technology Policy. NAML believes these are important steps to sustain necessary interagency partnerships. NAML calls on the Administration to look for ways to expand these efforts to better include the external marine laboratory community.

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