

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 10, 2018

The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Shaheen:

As the Committee on Appropriations begins the process of crafting a comprehensive, long-term spending measure that governs Fiscal Year 2019 (FY 2019), we write to urge the subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies to ensure such bill provides robust funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s ocean and coastal programs, in particular NOAA's coastal zone management and services program; the Coastal Zone Management Grants; the Community-based Restoration Program; the National Estuarine Research Reserve System; the National Sea Grant College Program; and the National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund.

These efforts promote federal, state, and local coordination while providing the essential tools, research, and support necessary for maintaining healthy, vibrant, and productive coastal communities and economies. Investing in programs such as these that promote resilience and safeguard our coastal economies is more important than ever before. Protecting lives and property as we prepare for changing conditions in our oceans and along our coasts requires science and know-how that NOAA is uniquely able to provide.

We respectfully request your support for the following programs:

Coastal Zone Management and Services: Coastal states and local governments are essential to fostering resilient coastal communities and managing precious natural resources. Since passage of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) in 1972, NOAA has supported the National Coastal Zone Management Program by providing financial assistance, policy guidance, coordination and leadership, technical assistance, and other support to help implement the 34 voluntary state coastal zone management programs along our oceans and Great Lakes. **We urge that \$54 million in funding be adopted for FY 2019 to support continued, robust investment in strong and resilient coastal economies.**

Coastal Zone Management Grants: Each year, our nation's ocean and Great Lakes economy contributes around \$350 billion to the U.S. GDP. With such a high level of economic activity and output, there is a clear need to provide support for programs that promote smart economic development while enhancing environmental protections in these regions. Coastal Zone Management Grants, which are further leveraged with non-federal match dollars, support a

number of projects, including those that better enable public access and beach recreation, improve working waterfronts and development of ocean-related businesses, map storm vulnerability and develop adaptation strategies for threatened coastal regions, and bolster resiliency. **For FY 2019, we urge the Committee to include \$100 million, an increase of \$25 million over the FY 2018 enacted level, in funding for the Coastal Zone Management Grants, in its spending measure.**

Community-based Restoration Program: NOAA's Community-based Restoration Program (CBRP) supports locally-driven coastal restoration projects with national, regional, and local organizations through competitively-awarded grants. This non-regulatory tool is unique within NOAA because of its ability to provide funding for innovative projects that provide immediate and lasting benefits to coastal communities. These public-private partnerships enjoy significant stakeholder engagement and leverage non-federal resources at 3-5 times the federal investment. Restoration projects funded by the CBRP improve the nation's degraded habitats while creating jobs and benefiting local economies. Improved fish habitat quality resulting from restoration also strengthens and revitalizes America's communities by buffering against storms, protecting vital infrastructure, reducing risks to public safety, and providing new recreational opportunities. **We urge that a minimum of \$68.4 million be adopted for the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Habitat Conservation and Restoration funding line in FY 2019, including a minimum of \$21.1 million for CBRP to allow the program to maintain support for these cost-effective partnerships that benefit communities and the environment.**

National Estuarine Research Reserve System: The National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS) protects more than 1.3 million acres of coastal and estuarine lands and waters through a network of 29 coastal sites across the nation. More than 2,500 cities and towns and 570 businesses directly benefit from the scientific and technical expertise provided by these reserves each year. By protecting and monitoring estuaries and coasts, NERRS reduces community vulnerability to hazards, supports the nation's coastal economy, and provides abundant high-quality scientific research. Funding for the program is matched by the states and leveraged, resulting in an average of more than five additional partners at each reserve. **To enhance data collection and delivery and support the development of a graduate fellowship program at each of the 29 reserves, we urge that \$27 million in funding for operations be adopted for FY 2019, an increase of \$2 million over the FY 2018 enacted level, and that \$1.7 million be adopted for Procurement, Acquisitions and Construction Activities to support existing NERRS sites.**

National Sea Grant College Program: The National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant) is a joint federal-state program that supports the health and resilience of the nation's coastal communities—including the Great Lakes, Gulf of Mexico, and Atlantic and Pacific coasts—yielding quantifiable economic, social, and environmental benefits at the national, regional, state, and local levels. Sea Grant is a unique program within NOAA, and one that has long enjoyed bipartisan support. Sea Grant promotes efficient, cost-effective partnerships between state universities, NOAA, coastal communities, fishermen, business, and other stakeholders. In 2016, Sea Grant leveraged federal investments to generate an additional \$611 million in economic impact, created or sustained over 7,000 jobs, and providing training for over

2,300 undergraduate and graduate students. **We urge that \$85 million in funding be adopted for FY 2019, an increase of \$20 million over the FY 2018 enacted level, to support the existing network and ongoing activities and to provide additional funding for efforts to strengthen Sea Grant's work related to coastal resilience.**

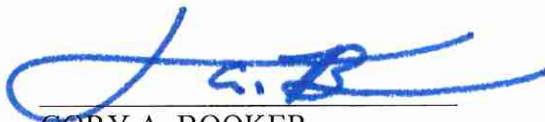
National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund: Enacted as part of the FY 2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act, the National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund provides grants to states, tribes, NGOs, and academic institutions for coastal restoration and research. The FY 2018 omnibus joined the Regional Coastal Resilience Grants and the competitive grant program under the National Oceans and Coastal Security Fund (NOCSF) under one program. NOCSF is managed jointly by NOAA and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and is intended to provide support for coastal community and ecosystem resiliency, habitat restoration and protection, smart coastal development, cooperative fisheries and resource management, protection of critical coastal public infrastructure, and data collection on the effects of sea level rise, changing ocean chemistry, and other coastal processes. **We urge that \$40 million in funding be adopted for FY 2019 to directly support this dedicated fund for the oceans and coasts.**


Sincerely,


RICHARD BLUMENTHAL
United States Senate

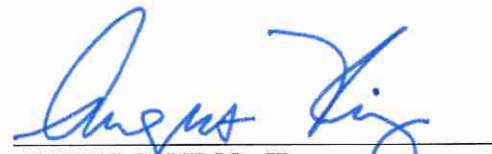

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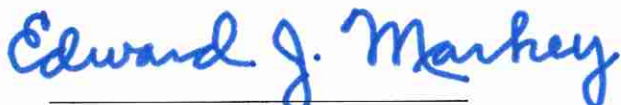

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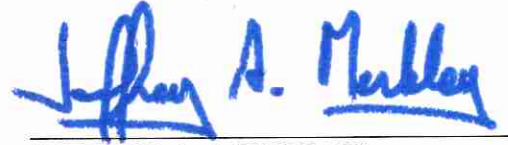

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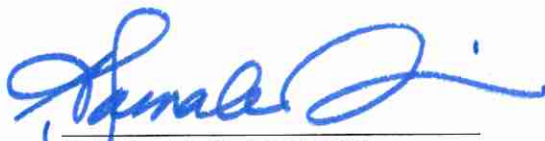

DEBBIE STABENOW
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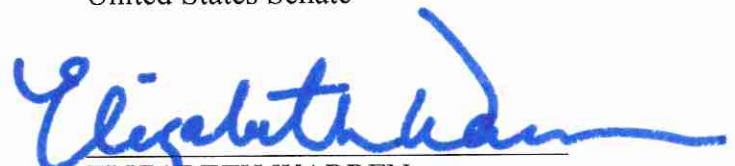

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