

July 13, 2004

The Honorable Vernon Ehlers
Chairman
Subcommittee on Environment, Technology and Standards
Committee on Science
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Ehlers:

On behalf of the nearly 300 institutional members of the Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education (CORE), the Sea Grant Association (SGA) and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC), we are writing in support of H.R. 4546, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Authorization Act of 2004. We commend you for acting so quickly to implement one of the primary recommendations of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. We believe passage of H.R. 4546 will strengthen and refine NOAA's mission, particularly in the areas of research and education.

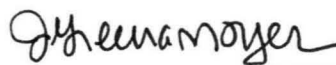
Our three associations collectively represent the nation's leading marine and atmospheric scientists and educators. We endorse the creation of a Deputy Assistant Secretary for Science and Technology. This person will play a number of important roles: including, bringing science and technology issues to the forefront of NOAA's agenda, improving partnerships among the research and operations line offices, and serving as a central point of contact for the external research community. We believe H.R. 4546 could be strengthened further by adding language that explicitly states the importance of basic research; emphasizes integration of research, outreach and education; and substantiates partnerships and communication between NOAA and external researchers.

Thank you for your support of oceanic and atmospheric sciences and for taking this important step to make NOAA stronger. We look forward to working with you towards passage of H.R. 4546.

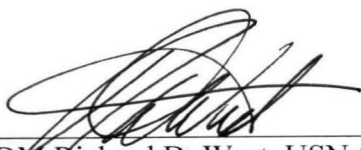
Sincerely,



Dr. Mark R. Abbott
Co-chair, Board on Oceans and Atmosphere,
National Association of State Universities and
Land-Grant Colleges



Dr. Robert R. Stickney
President, Sea Grant Association



RADM Richard D. West, USN (Ret.)
President, Consortium for Oceanographic
Research and Education