

Committee on Natural Resources

Rob Bishop Chairman
Markup Memorandum

September 24, 2018

To: All Natural Resources Committee Members

From: Majority Committee Staff – Richie O’Connell (x58331)

Markup: **H.R. 237 (Rep. Don Young, R-AK)**, to reauthorize the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009, and for other purposes.
Thursday, September 27, 2018, 10:15 AM; 1324 Longworth HOB

H.R. 237, Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act Amendments of 2017

Summary of the Bill

H.R. 237 reauthorizes the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009. This program supports a variety of data critical to safety, navigation and commerce. The legislation also creates staggered terms for members serving on the advisory committee and enhances the Secretary of Commerce’s discretion to distribute appropriated funds to States.

Cosponsors

Representatives Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU), Colleen Hanabusa (D-HI), Derek Kilmer (D-WA), Denny Heck (D-WA), David E. Price (D-NC), Marcy Kaptur (D-OH), Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR), Jenniffer González-Colón (R-Puerto Rico), Debbie Dingell (D-MI), Bill Posey (R-FL), Anna G. Eshoo (D-CA), Scott H. Peters (D-CA), Salud O. Carbajal (D-CA), Ted Lieu (D-CA), Rick Larsen (D-WA), John Garamendi (D-CA), and Bruce Poliquin (R-ME).

Background

The Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) is a national-regional partnership that provides important data to improve safety, enhance the economy, and protect our environment. IOOS is a coordinated network of people and technology that generates and disseminates continuous data models and services on coastal waters, including oceans in the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone, and the Great Lakes. Both near-real time and historical integrated ocean information is available.¹ These data consist of standardized information on environmental variables such as temperature, salinity, currents, nutrient concentrations, and contaminant levels, as well as other critical ecological factors.²

¹ IOOS. *About Us*. <https://ioos.noaa.gov/about/about-us/>:

² Id.

IOOS is governed by the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (ICOOS Act, Title XII, Subtitle C of Public Law 111-11). The ICOOS Act establishes NOAA as the agency responsible for implementation of the Act,³ and directs specific tasks and requirements, including preparing budgets and cost estimates, developing non-federal asset certification standards, and drafting a public-private use policy process.⁴



Map 1: Regional IOOS observing systems
Source: IOOS Association

NOAA’s National Ocean Service provides support for 11 IOOS Regional Associations (RA) through a competitive merit-based grant process.⁵ The RAs fill critical ocean observing information gaps at the local and national levels.⁶ The demand for ocean, coastal and Great Lake region data is high. The IOOS Independent Cost Estimate determined that a total of approximately \$534 million is needed to fulfill the nation’s identified coastal observing needs.⁷ While IOOS needs to meet national objectives, each of the 11 regions also tailors its work to local needs.

The IOOS system collects data via surface-level and deep-water gliders, which can be utilized for various situations from search-and-rescue missions to harmful algal bloom mapping near crucial water supplies.⁸ The Ocean Enterprise Study,⁹ in conjunction with high frequency shoreline radars, is used to measure current speed and direction up to 200 km offshore,¹⁰ aiding reliable maritime commerce.

IOOS is critical to people who rely on this consistent and accurate data for their lives and livelihoods. The data IOOS collects helps federal agencies like NOAA, the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, and the Environmental Protection Agency perform their everyday functions

³ Public Law 111-11 §12304(3).

⁴ Public Law 111-11 §12304.

⁵ *Id.* §12304(c)(3)(E)

⁶ IOOS Association. *Integrated Ocean Observing System: Saving Lives, Protecting Health & Promoting Commerce* <http://www.ioosassociation.org/sites/nfra/files/documents/onepagereports/FY%2019%20IOOS%20Request%20-%20FINAL.pdf>.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, *IOOS: Underwater Gliders*. Retrieved from <https://ioos.noaa.gov/project/underwater-gliders/>.

⁹ Ocean Enterprise Study. Retrieved from <https://ioos.noaa.gov/project/ocean-enterprise-study/>.

¹⁰ About HF Radar. Retrieved from <https://ioos.noaa.gov/project/hf-radar/>.

serving the public. Meanwhile, data collected by IOOS is also critical to our national and local economies. Ports, fishermen and seafood growers rely on this data, as well as emergency managers and researchers. The data collected by IOOS is utilized at all levels of our nation. From local fishermen to national agencies, IOOS provides taxpayers with the data required to support economies, research, and critical maritime safety.

H.R. 237, authored by Rep. Don Young (R-AK), would reauthorize the ICOOS Act of 2009 through Fiscal Year (FY) 2022. Originally Congress did not limit the amount of money this program could receive. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (Public Law 115-141) funded this program at \$42.5 million for FY 2018, and H.R. 237 caps the authorization at \$36.151M. The bill would also revise the Act to establish a system of staggered terms for members of the IOOS Advisory Committee. The bill also provides the Secretary of Commerce with additional discretion to distribute funds to States. A non-identical companion bill, S. 1425 (Sen. Wicker, R-MS), passed the Senate in January 2018.

Major Provisions of H.R. 237

Section 2 allows the NOAA Administrator to create staggered terms for advisory committee members.

Section 3 allows the Secretary of Commerce to disburse certain funds to the States.

Section 4 reauthorizes the program at \$36.151M for each of FYs 2018 through 2022.

Cost

The Congressional Budget Office has not completed a cost estimate for this legislation.

Administration Position

Unknown.

Anticipated Amendments

No amendments are anticipated at this time.

[Effect on Current Law \(Ramseyer\)](#)