



## OCEAN SCIENCE INITIATIVE

### *Research and Development Funding in the President's 2008 Budget*

In December, 2004, President Bush released the U.S. Ocean Action Plan and created a Cabinet-level Committee on Ocean Policy to take 88 actions to strengthen and better coordinate U.S. ocean programs and make our oceans, coasts and Great Lakes cleaner, healthier and more productive. In January 2007, the U.S. Ocean Action Plan Implementation Update provided a progress report: 83% of the actions have been met, and the remaining 17% are on schedule to be completed by their target dates. Federal agencies are moving forward with new activities in these areas to continue improvements in the management and protection of ocean resources.

President Bush is advancing ocean science and research as is called for in the Ocean Action Plan and outlined in the recently-released Ocean Research Priorities Plan and Implementation Strategy (ORPP). The ORPP, *Charting the Course for Ocean Sciences in the United States: Research Priorities for the Next Decade*, transcends traditional scientific disciplines and harnesses the power of interdisciplinary science, including the social and behavioral sciences, to meet the goal of improving our understanding, and therefore better informing, human interactions with the ocean ecosystem. The Plan identifies twenty national ocean research priorities for the next decade. Four near-term priorities, reflecting efforts to be pursued over the next 2-5 years, were developed to initiate rapid progress towards the 20 ocean research priorities:

1. Response of Coastal Ecosystems to Persistent Forcing and Extreme Events to provide better forecasts of coastal response to a variety of natural events and human influenced processes, such as hurricanes and non-point source pollution.
2. Comparative Analysis of Marine Ecosystem Organization to understand the complex dynamics of marine ecosystems and use that understanding to improve management of these critical areas and their resources.
3. Sensors for Marine Ecosystems to develop the tools needed to collect key, but elusive, scientific information on various biological and chemical processes necessary to better understand marine ecosystems.
4. Meridional Overturning Variability to enhance ongoing efforts to observe, understand, and predict changes in ocean circulation in the Atlantic Ocean, a key driver of climate variability and change.

To address these ORPP near-term priorities, the President's 2008 Budget provides a total of \$40 million in new funding. Advances in these research areas will require interagency efforts that build upon and include on-going activities at multiple agencies. The new funding is provided at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA: \$20 million), the National Science Foundation (NSF: \$17 million) and the U.S. Geological Survey (\$3 million).

The 2008 Budget also proposes \$8 million to define and map the outer limits of the U.S. continental shelf (areas beyond 200 miles from the U.S. coast that meet certain geological criteria). Defining those limits will allow the U.S. to confirm its resource rights, estimated at \$1.2 trillion.

An additional \$32 million is included for NOAA to develop an operational ocean monitoring network, for technology and other infrastructure to support ocean science, for International Polar Year activities, and for research on protected species and commercial fisheries.

The Budget also continues funding for NSF's Oceans Observations Initiative, which will provide important infrastructure to support sustained ocean observations and research.