



Memorandum

To: IOOS Federal Advisory Committee Members
From: Josie Quintrell, Director IOOS Association
Date: August 15, 2019

Welcome! On behalf of the IOOS Association Board of Directors, I want to thank you for your time and service to the IOOS FAC. We look forward to working with you on how IOOS can better address the needs of the variety of stakeholders whose lives and livelihoods depend on timely and reliable data about our oceans, coasts and Great Lakes.

The IOOS Association is a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the IOOS enterprise. We work with the 11 IOOS Regional Associations (RAs) and the IOOS Program Office to improve coordination and collaboration, and to advocate for the importance of ocean and coastal observations. The Association is small, with one full-time Director and a part-time Program Coordinator. Our funding comes from a combination of member dues – all eleven RAs are members - and a grant from the Program Office to support coordination and collaboration activities. A portion of the dues are from non-Federal sources to support our advocacy work.

IOOS is a unique federal program that integrates across 17 federal agencies and 11 regional observing systems. The US territorial waters encompass 11 Large Marine Ecosystem (LMEs) that range from the cold waters of the Arctic to the tropical waters of the Caribbean. The Great Lakes, with over 10,000 miles of coastline, are the world's largest system of freshwater lakes. Each region is characterized by unique geological, physical and chemical properties and human uses. The regional approach to IOOS allows products and information to be tailored to the unique characteristics of each region.

We welcome the opportunity to highlight how IOOS is impacting stakeholders and others at the regional level. By way of introduction here is a short list of some of the Association's recent activities:

- The Filling the Gaps Campaign. This five-year campaign aimed at filling critical gaps in the High Frequency Radar network and the glider network is a major focus of the Association. Since 2017, the campaign has increased the IOOS regional budget line by \$7.5 million supporting the new radars in SECOORA, GCOOS, NANOOS, AOOOS, CariCOOS and recapitalizing radars in SCCOOS, CeNCOOS and MARACOOS. In addition, gliders are being flown in all regions. These assets support enhanced search and rescue, spill response and preparedness, hurricane intensity forecasting,

right whale detection, detection of harmful algal blooms and other societal goals. The campaign has two more years and the Association is reviewing options for continuing the effort and expanding it to address other critical issues such as ecosystem monitoring (HABs in particular) and the critical issue of recapitalization of aging infrastructure.

- **Biological and Ecosystem Observations.** Regional stakeholders continue to want more information on biology and ecosystem monitoring from forecasting harmful algal blooms, detecting and responding to ocean acidification, monitoring hypoxia, sound, eDNA and monitoring life at all trophic levels. Exploring how to improve biological observations has been a focus of the recent in-person meetings and has been supported by dedicated funding from the Program Office for integration of biological data and a small group is working to implement the recommendations of the Ecosystem Mooring Workshop to broaden the scope to include all types of platforms.
- **IOOS Economic Valuation Study -** Working with the IOOS Program Office and the NOAA Economic Office, the Association is working with Dr. Charlie Colgan of the Center for the Blue Economy in Monterey to assess the value of the IOOS observations. The study included researching valuation methods, developing and testing a web-based survey instrument and a trial run with 3 RAs. The trial survey is running through the summer on the three RA websites. The results will be analyzed in the fall. Plans are under way to expand the survey to all the RAs in the coming year.
- **Meetings with leadership and IOOS Agencies.** The Association meets regularly with NOAA leadership, OMB, representatives from the IOOS Federal agencies and with strategic partners in Washington DC. The recent certification of all eleven RAs opens the door for more engagement with the other IOOS Federal agencies.
- **Coordination and communication.** IOOS is a distributed system and communication is key to its success. The Association works with the Program Office and the regions to enhance communications and coordination through monthly webinars, in-person meetings, newsletters and outreach efforts.

This is just a sample of the kind of work the Association does. We welcome the opportunity to provide more information about the work of the regions and about some of the opportunities and challenges as IOOS moves into the next decade.