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U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS®) Advisory Committee

Dr. Neil Jacobs
Under Secretary, Oceans and Atmosphere (Acting)
1401 Constitution Avenue NW, Room 58006
Office of the Under Secretary/Administrator
Washington, DC 20230

Dr. Jacobs,

We the undersigned members of the U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS®) Advisory Committee recently had our first two public meetings to discuss issues related to the IOOS Program and how it can be leveraged to meet operational ocean observing requirements that are critical to supporting the blue economy.

Since that first meeting, one of the worst viral pandemics in history has besieged our country. Our national and global economies were largely shuttered, and we are tasked with simultaneously playing defense against a novel and formidable opponent, and launching an offensive counter-strike to save our economy. We write you this letter because we believe that IOOS can substantially contribute to that offensive.

The Blue Economy, through this pandemic, is open for business. Maritime commerce and transportation continues, and seafood remains a critical and safe source of protein to feed the nation. As these sectors continue to deliver goods to our citizens, their growing demand will help reduce unemployment by stimulating job growth. IOOS products and services - like the High Frequency Radar (HFR) network, underwater gliders, integrated modeling capabilities, and real-time data delivery underpin the success of industries like these, safety at sea, offering decisional support and service delivery to enable these sectors to work safer and more efficiently. Furthermore, with an "above normal" projected hurricane season just around the corner, IOOS will continue delivering real-time data to help coastal managers keep our communities safe.

Our committee is dedicated to advancing the mission of IOOS and of NOAA, and has identified three priorities for the current term:

1. Facilitating better alignment between all ocean observing assets across the federal government, particularly within NOAA;
2. Identifying a common set of requirements across all IOOS partners in order to understand if resource levels are commensurate with the IOOS mission mandate; and
3. Charting a future course for the IOOS Enterprise, including both federal and non-federal components, based on building strategic partnerships and growing capacity to deliver critical products and services that stakeholders need the most.

As you continue to lead NOAA through one of its most challenging periods, we want you to know that we support you and are here to lend a helping hand. Our talented and experienced committee is uniquely positioned to offer critical advice when tensions are high and budgets are tight, communicate the importance of ocean observations to Congress, and help improve the efficiency of operations across all NOAA's ocean observing programs.

Respectfully,



Scott C. Rayder

Executive Director, Alabama Water Institute
Chair, U.S. IOOS Advisory Committee

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