

**U.S. IOOS Advisory Committee  
Virtual Public Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
January 21, 2025**

**Notification and Availability of Meeting Materials**

The U.S. Integrated Ocean Observing System Advisory Committee (IOOS AC) was announced to the public by Federal Register Notice and on the IOOS Advisory Committee website. Meeting presentations and background material are posted on the website. Attendees participated virtually by WebEx.

**IOOS Advisory Committee Members Present:**

Debra Hernandez, SECOORA, Chair  
Eric Anderson, Colorado School of Mines  
Sara Bender, Sall Family Foundation  
Daniel Costa, Institute of Marine Sciences, University of California Santa Cruz  
Catherine Edwards, Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, University of Georgia  
Glen Gawarkiewicz, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute  
Monty Graham, Florida Institute of Oceanography  
Eoin Howlett, Trinnex  
Barbara Kirkpatrick, GCOOS  
Laura Lilly, Exponent  
Julio Morell, Caribbean Coastal Ocean Observing System (CARICOOS)  
Nick Rome, Center of Ocean Leadership  
Steve Woll, Little Creek Applied Science  
Kristen Yarincik, IOOS Association (ex officio)

**U.S. IOOS Office Leadership and Staff in Attendance:**

Krisa Arzayus (DFO), IOOS Office  
Carl Gouldman, IOOS Office  
Courtney Edwards, IOOS Office

**Meeting Welcome and Goals**

*Krisa Arzayus, U.S. IOOS Advisory Committee Designated Federal Officer, and Deputy Director, NOAA's U.S. IOOS Office*  
*Debra Hernandez, U.S. IOOS Advisory Committee Chair*

K. Arzayus welcomed the Committee members and thanked them for their patience with the change in plans for this meeting. She reviewed the agenda and discussed housekeeping matters. D. Hernandez reviewed the goals of the meeting, which are to discuss some governance issues and hear informative presentations.

**Governance**

*Krisa Arzayus and Debra Hernandez*

The first topic discussed was to select a vice-Chair for the Committee. D. Hernandez said in thinking about the vice-Chair role, it should be someone who balances her expertise and

geography as Chair, as well as experience with the Committee. She had a previous conversation with E. Howlett and he is willing to serve as vice-Chair. C. Edwards made a motion to nominate E. Howlett. S. Woll seconded the motion. There was no further discussion or objections. E. Howlett was approved as vice-Chair unanimously.

The second topic of discussion was proposed changes to the bylaws. K. Arzayus reviewed the proposed track changes document posted on the Committee's website [here](#). The majority of the changes were related to updating the legislation references, matching language found in the Committee Charter, updating the terms for ex-officio members to better align with Committee member terms, and clarification of the public comment period in meetings. K. Arzayus clarified that the Committee does not receive a lot of public comment or public participation. Often members of the public are from other agencies interested in a particular briefing.

D. Hernandez asked if the previously mentioned working groups were considered subcommittees as defined in the bylaws. K. Arzayus clarified that the Committee does not have any standing subcommittees, which are more formal entities. The Committee has "preparatory working groups", as they are more ad hoc and change as the Committee's priorities change.

E. Howlett made a motion to approve the bylaw changes. D. Costa seconded the motion. There was no further discussion or objections. The changes were approved unanimously.

### **IOOS Association 101 and Update**

*Kristen Yarincik, Executive Director, IOOS Association*

K. Yarincik gave an overview of the IOOS Association and provided an update on recent activities, as detailed in the slides posted on the Committee's website [here](#).

S. Woll asked about the "IA request" line on slide 14, which K. Yarincik clarified stood for "IOOS Association". B. Kirkpatrick asked if there was a budget request tied to the hurricane glider request as part of the letter to the new Administration. K. Yarincik said there was not a specific dollar amount included. However, there was a recent hurricane supplemental request for about \$15-16M, which would not only help sustain but grow the program. B. Kirkpatrick also asked about evaluation tools for the K-12 toolkit. K. Yarincik said there are no evaluation measures, but that could be considered. She clarified this was not a curriculum, but a tool educators could use.

M. Graham voiced concern about the potential uphill battle to get the ICOOS Act reauthorized. K. Yarincik said historically, reauthorization hasn't been an issue. Leadership has not been identified yet in the Republican side of the House, but they have ideas on who to approach. They are talking with Rep. Bonamici. M. Graham posed the idea of expanding the coastal regional associations to the more interior of the country, particularly as many of the non-coastal states have more clout. K. Yarincik liked the idea, but there is a cost/benefit analysis needed as many of the RAs are already engaging with their Congressional districts and may not have the capacity to engage additional districts. D. Hernandez chimed in as a current RA Executive Director. Their practice has been to reach out to all senators that do cover the interior of the states in that region. They also reach out to House members that have expressed interest in science/environment. She

believes these practices are common among other RAs. D. Hernandez added on the reauthorization topic that the last ICOOS Act reauthorization was signed by the previous Trump Administration.

S. Bender really appreciated the presentation. She asked about the collaboration needs of the RAs (themes emerging, demand, and how that information is collected/disseminated). K. Yarincik responded that the RAs perform the community engagement themselves, but meeting with targeted groups, attending meetings, etc. All of this work circles back to the IOOS Association by way of the twice a year meetings. That said, the work being done under the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) will be more ongoing and the IOOS Association will be providing project coordination for the IRA Topic 2 effort. S. Bender expressed interest in hearing more about the private sector engagement at a later time, both how the RAs individually are engaging but also how the IOOS Association is bringing that all together. K. Yarincik said this is an opportunity area for the IOOS Association, to bring the regions and industry together.

K. Arzayus noted that one of the briefings that was canceled with the revised meeting was a budget briefing from C. Gouldman. This will be incorporated into the rescheduled meeting. She also noted that there were several years in between when the ICOOS Act expired previously and when it was reauthorized. So the IOOS program does not stop existing without it, but of course having it be authorized is preferable. K. Arzayus added that there is an effort from within the IOOS office to coordinate with the RAs and the IOOS Association, including with the Regional Coordinators. K. Yarincik cautioned that while there was a lag in authorization previously, there is more urgency this time due to potential Trump administration efforts to eliminate programs that are not authorized.

Following on to the IRA Topic 2 discussion, D. Costa stated the Marine Life Preparatory Working Group of the previous IOOS AC made recommendations for the RAs to move towards a common set of measurements to become a more integrated system. K. Yarincik added that RAs that are collecting new types of data, such as eDNA, are being encouraged to work with long-standing projects, such as passive acoustics, to develop those common practices.

S. Woll asked about the likelihood of BIL and IRA funds getting taken back. K. Yarincik hears mixed messages that while it may be legal to take funds back that are obligated but not spent, that money is going to the states and there may be a low appetite from Congress to repeal. The BIL and IRA funds at agencies may be more at risk. C. Gouldman pointed out the language in the recent Executive Order on Unleashing American Energy that calls for halting disbursement of BIL and IRA funds. BNOAA is waiting for more guidance on interpretation of that language.

## **IOOC Engagement**

*Deerin Babb-Brott, IOOS Co-Chair*

D. Babb-Brott provided a [briefing](#) on how the IOOC and the IOOS AC can better engage. Until more guidance is released from the new Administration, he is referencing policy documents from the first Trump administration as a template. This includes a Presidential memo on establishing mapping, exploring and characterizing the EEZ, and congressional authorization of the Ocean

Policy Committee. Once political appointees come on board, then the IOOC can get into more specifics as to what they will address.

He reviewed how the two groups currently engage, through regular updates at meetings, recommendations provided by the IOOS AC, and IOOC members serving as ex-officios on IOOS AC. The proposed path moving forward is to develop a mutually agreed upon focus area, establish a joint task team, and to establish a regular reporting session at IOOC meetings of IOOS AC updates. One current potential topic is around ocean co-use.

D. Hernandez acknowledged from the previous conversation with the IOOC the willingness on behalf of the IOOC to shift from a call and response model to a more collaborative model. S. Woll asked for confirmation of his understanding that the IOOC is composed of civil servants from multiple agencies in a coordinating committee and IOOS has the universities and other partners. This was confirmed.

D. Babb-Brott added that conversation have been held in the past about the best way for the IOOC, IOOS office, and IOOS AC to interact. From his IOOC perspective, the question is how to best use the leadership within the IOOC agencies to support IOOS interests by providing high level input, justification, motivation, and benefits of a coordinated approach.

G. Gawarkiewicz resonated with the potential topic of co-use of the oceans, citing examples of commercial fisheries, offshore wind, and right whale conservation. There is a concern, particularly in fisheries, about the pace at which decisions are made, relevant to how rapidly change is occurring.

M. Graham asked for clarification on the relationship between the IOOC and the Ocean Policy Committee (OPC), noting that the Ocean Research Advisory Panel (ORAP) is operating and they are focused on National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP) topics. He wondered if there was a place for the IOOS AC. D. Babb-Brott pointed to the NOAA Ocean Policy Committee [website](#) to help understand the relationship between all the groups. He noted that the Ocean Science and Technology Subcommittee under the Ocean Policy Committee is called the Subcommittee on Ocean Science and Technology (SOST) when it serves the National Science and Technology Council. It is the same body of people - it just goes by different names for each group. The IOOC is nested under the OPC, as is the NOPP. How this matrix of groups works together may be changed by the new administration. The OPC could be used to help provide direction of ocean priorities.

N. Rome suggested inviting the ORAP members to a future meeting, especially as he sees some overlap between their purview and the priorities the Committee submitted from the homework. He suggested that an analysis be done comparing those homework results to the IOOC and IOOS strategic plans to look for alignment. D. Babb-Brott agreed about the ORAP suggestion. He also pointed out that Michael Kratsios has been nominated to be the Director of OSTP (and therefore co-chair of OPC) and his background is in AI.

There was a general consensus to move forward with collaborations with the IOOC, including the co-use topic previously presented.

D. Hernandez asked if the co-use topic was meant to solve problems around operations, long-term planning, or both. D. Babb-Bratt responded that there was not a priority as to which. It could be about fundamentally changing how/where large data sets are sent and how to better integrate that data. Alternatively, it could be recognition that more of a specific data type is needed. He suggests putting recommendations forward that propose solutions that think fundamentally differently about how to do business compared to the past.

### **Public Comment Period**

*Krisa Arzayus*

K. Arzayus opened the floor for public comment. No one spoke up. No written public comments were received.

### **Wrap Up and Next Steps**

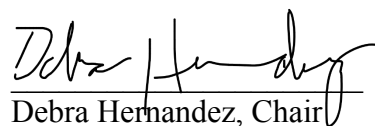
*Krisa Arzayus and Debra Hernandez*

K. Arzayus said the in-person meeting in Houma will be rescheduled. Staff will be sending out a poll to find a new date. Staff will also do some more analysis on the pre-work results, as previously discussed.

D. Hernandez said the recommendations to the new administration have been postponed, but the group will circle back at the rescheduled meeting.

The meeting was adjourned.

### **Minutes Certification**

  
Debra Hernandez, Chair

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Date