



THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
Washington, D.C. 20230

April 5, 2005

The Honorable Richard Cheney
President of the Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-0010

Dear Mr. President:

I enclose a draft bill entitled the "National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Organic Act of 2005" and a section-by-section analysis.

The Bush Administration continues its support for the timely passage of an organic act that codifies the establishment and purposes of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). This is an important step forward in enhancing NOAA's ability to carry out the research and management objectives entrusted to it. Admiral James Watkins, Chairman of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy, has testified before committees of the United States Senate and the House of Representatives about the importance of passage of such a bill. The Administration strongly supports this recommendation and transmitted this proposed legislation to the Congress last June. We appreciate the actions taken by Members of Congress to begin work on this legislation and look forward to working with the Congress to complete action this year.

This proposed bill, which is part of the U.S. Ocean Action Plan, mirrors the general language found in many organic acts. As such, it is not intended to be prescriptive but to establish NOAA within the Department of Commerce and provide a framework for the future. This approach provides the opportunity for NOAA's programs and structure to evolve over time just as national priorities and the state of science also evolve. Greater specificity can be found in our program authorizing statutes. We stand ready to work with Congress on changes to those authorizing statutes and appreciate that many such descriptive bills have already been introduced this session.

The science and management conducted by NOAA for the Nation is critically important and contributes to a foundation for a healthy economy touching approximately one-third of the gross domestic product every day. Our proposed bill would greatly simplify NOAA's ability to undertake research activities in support of its mission and to assess and forecast changes in ocean, coastal and Great Lakes ecosystems and in the atmosphere.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised that there is no objection to the submission of this draft bill and that its enactment would be in accord with the program of the President.

Sincerely,

Carlos M. Gutierrez

Enclosures

Identical Letters To:

The Honorable Dennis Hastert
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-6501

The Honorable Bill Frist
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-7010

The Honorable Tom DeLay
House Majority Leader
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-6502

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
House Minority Leader
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-6537

The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-7020

The Honorable Richard W. Pombo
Chairman, Committee on Resources
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-6201

The Honorable Nick J. Rahall II
Ranking Member, Committee on Resources
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-6201

The Honorable Sherwood L. Boehlert
Chairman, Committee on Science
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-6301

The Honorable Bart Gordon
Ranking Member, Committee on Science
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515-6301

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Chairman, Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-6125

The Honorable Daniel Inouye
Co-Chair, Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-6125