

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS OF CHANGES TO THE SEA GRANT LEGISLATION

Global Changes

Throughout the document, the term “advisory services” has been replaced with “extension”. Additionally, all references to the Sea Grant Review Panel have been replaced with references to the National Sea Grant Advisory Board, consistent with changes made in section 209.

Section 1. Short Title and References.

This section of the bill cites the short title as the “*National Sea Grant College Program Authorization Act of 2008*,” and establishes that, unless otherwise noted, references to amendments or repeal of a section or other provision are to be considered to be made to a section or provision of the *National Sea Grant College Program Act* (33 U.S.C. §§ 1121 *et seq.*).

Section 2. Amendments to Findings and Purpose.

This section provides a few minor amendments to section 202 of the *National Sea Grant College Program Act (NSGCPA)*; changes are proposed to clarify activities of the National Sea Grant Program (Sea Grant).

Section 3. Definitions.

This section deletes the definition of “panel” and replaces it with a definition for “board”, consistent with changes made to section 209 and adds a definition for “extension” consistent with changes made throughout the document.

Section 4. National Sea Grant College Program.

This section amends section 204 of the *NSGCPA* to encourage collaboration among sea grant colleges and institutes, and between sea grant colleges and institutes and other entities. This section includes language specifying that partnerships between or among individual sea grant programs, on a regional or national basis, are encouraged. Such partnerships would allow state programs to work together to address regional issues and apply for grants together (see also section 205(c) of the bill).

This section also authorizes Sea Grant to support international activities, including efforts to assist foreign nations in the application of knowledge and technology to support sustainable forms of coastal and marine resource development and conservation, consistent with the Administration’s *U.S. Ocean Action Plan*.

Finally, this section calls for a review of guidelines related to the activities and responsibilities of sea grant colleges and sea grant institutes every four years. It also revises the role of the National Sea Grant Director to evaluate and assess the performance of Sea Grant programs, removing the requirement to “rate the programs according to their relative performance into no less than 5 categories, with each of the 2 best performing categories containing no more than 25 percent of the programs.” The section also directs the Director to allocate funding in such a manner to stimulate partnerships among sea grant colleges and institutes, and with other programs within the Administration, to address priorities identified at the regional and national levels.

Section 5. Changes to Grants and Contracts.

This section amends section 205 of the *NSGCPA* to encourage collaboration among sea grant colleges and institutes, and between sea grant colleges and institutes and other entities. The amendments provided in this section support Sea Grant's national and regional plans by providing support for programs and projects that address regional and national priorities. Subsection (c) would allow the Secretary to make grants to a collaboration including one or more sea grant colleges or institutes, to address a regional or national issue. Such awards would not be subject to the state-matching requirements (but would allow for voluntary matching contributions from state or appropriate regional entities).

To most effectively promote regional collaboration, subsection (d) would allow Sea Grant to provide Federal collaborators with funding to support partnerships. Sea Grant already has authority to support state agencies as well as industrial and private partners (see section 204(c)(4) of the *NSGCPA*). In addition, Sea Grant already has authority to accept funding from other Federal departments and agencies (see section 204(c)(4)(F)), but cannot provide funding to those same potential Federal partners. The proposed language allows Sea Grant to provide limited funds to Federal partners to support a Sea Grant-led collaborative activity.

Section 6. Sea Grant Colleges and Sea Grant Institutes.

This section provides for minor amendments to section 207 of the *NSGCPA* (see Global Changes, above).

Section 7. Fellowships.

This section amends section 208 of the *NSGCPA* to make clear the Dean John A. Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship awards are not subject to the Federal cost share requirements.

Section 8. National Sea Grant Advisory Board.

This section amends section 209 of the *NSGCPA* by modifying the Sea Grant Review Panel into the "National Sea Grant Advisory Board." The language specifies that the primary role of the Board is to advise the Secretary and the Director concerning:

- strategies utilizing the National Sea Grant College Program to address the Nation's highest priorities regarding the understanding, assessment, development, utilization, and conservation of ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes resources and the environment;
- the designation and operation of sea grant colleges and sea grant institutes; and
- such other matters as the Secretary or the Director refers to the board for review and advice.

In this section, the board's participation in assessments of sea grant colleges, sea grant institutes, or sea grant programs is retained. Section 209 is also amended to state that the board shall report to the Congress every four years on the state of the National Sea Grant College Program and shall indicate the progress made toward meeting the priorities identified in the national sea grant strategic plan. Finally, this section allows for the establishment of subcommittees, which may include members external to the board.

Section 9. Authorization of Appropriations.

This section amends section 212 by replacing the series of specific authorizations (invasives, oysters, etc.) with a more general authorization for regional and national activities. The section is also amended to raise the administrative cap of the program from 5 to 7 percent.

Section 10. Repeal of Annual Report.

This section repeals section 9 of the *National Sea Grant College Program Act Amendments of 2002*, which required an annual report on ocean and coastal research initiatives be produced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Science Foundation.