

Bolstering Long-Term Understanding and Exploration of the Great Lakes, Oceans, Bays, and Estuaries (BLUE GLOBE) Act

Summary

Congresswoman Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and Congressman Don Young (R-AK)

Background:

Earth is fundamentally a blue planet. Our ocean covers more than 70 percent of the planet's surface and is home to most life on the planet. It generates the majority of oxygen that we breathe and is linked to the water that we drink. Our ocean regulates our climate and absorbs carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. It provides healthy meals for people every day and drives the blue economy. The power of ocean waves generates clean energy and transports us. But despite our intrinsic connection to our ocean, we know very little about what is beneath its surface.

We have better maps of the Moon than we do of the ocean floor. According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), less than twenty percent of the global ocean is currently mapped, and the ocean data that we do have is not always easily accessible. To protect and preserve one of our planet's greatest natural resources, we need to rapidly accelerate the collection, management, and dissemination of data on the ocean, Great Lakes, bays, estuaries, and coasts.

The BLUE GLOBE Act will:

- **Strengthen ocean data collection and monitoring efforts and improve the coordination of current federal and international programs.** The bill would direct existing ocean-focused interagency committees to coordinate overlapping data collection by satellites, buoys, submarines, gliders, vessels, and other data collection vehicles and technologies, align supercomputing and data storage efforts, develop cross-agency databases, and support consistent quality assurance, integration, and archiving practices.
- **Assess the potential for an Advanced Research Project Agency–Oceans (ARPA-O).** The bill tasks the National Academy of Sciences with evaluating the need for and feasibility of establishing an ARPA-O to overcome the long-term and high-risk barriers in the development of ocean technologies.
- **Advance and deploy emerging data and monitoring technologies through Cooperative Institutes.** The bill expands the work of NOAA's Cooperative Institutes to include a focus on data and monitoring technology like research vessels, unmanned vehicles, and sensors. The bill would also create an Ocean Innovation prize to catalyze the rapid development and deployment of data collection and monitoring technology.
- **Improve technology innovation to address Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.** The bill adds innovative technology components to the 2020 NDAA Maritime Security and Fisheries Enforcement Act to better address IUU fishing.
- **Support education and workforce development efforts for the Blue Economy.** The bill directs federal agencies to develop a workforce study to assess workforce shortages related to careers in oceanic and atmospheric data collection and actions the federal government can take to promote diversity in STEM education. The bill would also direct federal agencies to better assess the value of the Blue Economy.
- **Improve federal investments in ocean data and monitoring.** The bill reauthorizes NOAA's Hydrographic Services Improvement Program.

If you would like additional information, please contact Maxine Sugarman in Congresswoman Bonamici's office at 5-0855 or Maxine.Sugarman@mail.house.gov.