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1st District of Oregon

BLUE GLOBE Act Section-by-Section Summary

Section 1. Short Title; Table of Contents.
Bolstering Long-term Understanding and Exploration of the Great Lakes, Oceans, Bays, and Estuaries Act, or the "BLUE GLOBE Act."

TITLE I — GENERAL PROVISIONS

Section 101. Definitions.
Provides definitions for terms used in the bill.

Section 102. Rule of Construction.
Provides that nothing in the bill limits NOAA authorities under section 24 of the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 or the Geospatial Data Act of 2018.

Section 103. Biennial Implementation Report.
Requires NOAA to submit a biennial consolidated report to Congress on implementation of each activity authorized under the bill. Specifies required contents, including references to all other reports required under the bill, summaries of activities under each title, interagency and international coordination activities, outcomes of the IUU pilot program, prize competitions, and Regional Ocean Workforce Partnerships, and the status of the ARPA-O assessment. Limits reported information to what has not been described under other reports in the bill.

TITLE II — INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AND DATA STANDARDS

Section 201. Interagency Activities of the National Ocean Mapping, Exploration, and Characterization (NOMEC) Council.
Directs the NOMEC Council, in consultation with the Interagency Ocean Observation Committee (IOOC), to work with relevant international bodies to improve the collection of robust, direct measurements of covered waters and support interagency coordination across multiple observation and data collection platforms. Requires the NOMEC Council to submit an annual report on updates, gaps, and recommendations.

Section 202. Federal Geographic Data Committee.
Directs the Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC) to consult with the National Geospatial Advisory Committee in working with relevant international bodies on geospatial and satellite-based measurements of covered waters, including by:

- Developing federal geospatial data management standards and practices;
- Aligning priorities and standards activities of lead agencies under the National Geospatial Data Asset water, oceans, and coasts theme; and
- Reporting on updates, gaps, recommendations, and any conflicts between existing theme standards and NOMEC Council priorities.

Section 203. Interagency Coordination of Ocean and Coastal Mapping Activities.
Directs the NOMEC Council, in consultation with the Interagency Working Group on Ocean and Coastal Mapping (IWG-OCM), to work with relevant international bodies to collect robust bathymetric and seabed characterization data and coordinate with the National Centers for Environmental Information to improve the findability, accessibility, and usability of ocean and coastal mapping data for research, education, and coastal planning.

Section 204. Data Rights, Standardization, and Licensing for Data of Covered Waters.
Requires NOAA to coordinate with the IOOC, FGDC, and IWG-OCM to include licensing terms for data and products supported by the bill, which would:

- Require open and interoperable data formatting, with exceptions for privacy, national security, and proprietary limitations'
- Authorize commercial data and service procurement; and
- Establish compliance and enforcement mechanisms.

Section 205. Annual Ocean and Coastal Mapping Progress Report.
Requires the NOMEC Council to annually publish a progress report on ocean and coastal mapping and characterization objectives, developed in consultation with the Interagency Working Group on Ocean Exploration and Characterization, including the status of progress toward NOMEC Council mapping and characterization objectives.

Section 206. Conformance with Geospatial Data Act Requirements.
Requires the FGDC to verify that ocean and coastal datasets developed or supported under the bill conform to applicable requirements of the Geospatial Data Act of 2018.

TITLE III — TECHNOLOGY TO COMBAT IUU FISHING

Section 301. Definitions.
Amends the Maritime SAFE Act to define "innovative technologies", which includes satellite imagery and tracking, advanced electronic monitoring equipment, vessel location data, genetic and molecular tracking methods, and electronic catch documentation and seafood traceability systems.

Section 302. Pilot Program to Improve Detection and Interdiction of IUU Fishing.
Directs the U.S. Coast Guard to coordinate with NOAA and the State Department to establish a pilot program to support illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing detection and interdiction, which would:

- Integrate emerging detection technologies;
- Develop electronic evidence protocols for enforcement action and prosecution use;
- Coordinate with the Interagency Working Group on IUU Fishing; and
- Support joint procurement and information sharing with relevant agencies, Regional Fisheries Management Organizations, and international and academic research partners.

TITLE IV — OCEAN INNOVATION PRIZE COMPETITIONS

Section 401. Ocean Innovation Prize Competitions.
Directs NOAA to establish annual prize competitions to support the development and deployment of data and technologies to improve ocean-related monitoring. Ocean Innovation Prize competitions would be designed to:

- Be compatible with SBIR and STTR programs and phased for project success;
- Include merit-based review processes with scientific and technical judges;
- Prioritize projects for technologies with cross-market applicability, integration potential, and commercialization pathways; and
- Provide pre-award reporting criteria for winners to submit technical outcomes and commercialization prospects.

TITLE V — NOAA PROGRAMS AND OBSERVING MODERNIZATION

Section 501. Updates to Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998.
Extends the authorizations of appropriations for hydrographic survey activities, including for nautical mapping and charting, vessel leasing and time chartering, survey vessel operation, geodetic activities, and tide and current measurements, through fiscal year 2031.

Section 502. Amendments to the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act of 2009.
Establishes a funding allocation floor to transition observing technologies to operations and recapitalization, including high-frequency radar, autonomous platforms, biogeochemical sensors, animal telemetry systems, and coupled forecast model development. Requires NOAA to submit a 5-year plan for transition activities, including objectives, identified barriers, operational uses, emerging technologies, and technology transition strategies.

Section 503. Connectivity and Emerging Technologies.
Directs NOAA to support advanced mapping technology testing, adoption, and integration into its existing observing, mapping, monitoring, forecasting, and operational systems, including by:

- Coordinating with the Department of Defense, National Science Foundation, and other agency heads to expand access to test ranges, data standards, and platforms;
- Coordinating with NSF, the Rolling Deck to Repository program, and the University-National Oceanographic Laboratory System to leverage existing data collection and archiving systems from the academic research fleet and promote consistency in data standards and protocols.

Section 504. Technology Transition Oversight.
Requires NOAA to submit a 5-year technology transition and recapitalization plan, reviewed for feasibility by the National Academies of Sciences, to Congress, including:

- Recapitalization schedules for high-frequency radar, gliders, and other observing platforms;
- The status and planned integration of broadband connectivity at sea, artificial intelligence, machine learning, uncrewed surface vessels, autonomous underwater

vehicles, acoustic monitoring systems, and environmental DNA technologies into NOAA observing and operational workflows; and
- Performance metrics, including system uptime, data latency, and forecast skill improvements.

TITLE VI — OCEAN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Section 601. Interagency Advisory Committee on Ocean Workforce Pathways.
Directs NOAA to coordinate with the IOOC and Departments of Labor and Education to establish an Interagency Advisory Committee on Ocean Workforce Pathways, composed of agency representatives, private sector leaders, research institutions, and workforce development officials, to:
- Coordinate ocean workforce development activities, assess workforce needs and skills gaps, and promote access to education, training, credentialing, and employment opportunities;
- Develop and update a National Ocean Workforce Strategy to identify workforce needs, skills gaps, career pathways, and regional priorities; and
- Leverage existing NOAA programs and interagency agreements to implement the strategy.

Section 602. Alternative Ocean Workforce Pathways.
Requires NOAA to support programs to expand access to education, training, credentialing, and employment in ocean workforce sectors through alternative and nontraditional pathways, including paid internships, fellowships, registered apprenticeships, experiential learning tied to observing systems and platforms, and reskilling and upskilling programs for incumbent workers.

Section 603. Ocean Workforce Credentials and Certifications.
Directs NOAA to coordinate with the Interagency Committee to help develop and align industry-recognized credentials and certifications for ocean workforce careers, including by:
- Partnering with institutions of higher education and businesses to identify priority occupations and define skill and competency qualifications; and
- Supporting portable credentials across regions and economic sectors, aligned with emerging technologies and the National Ocean Workforce Strategy.

Section 604. Regional Ocean Workforce Partnerships.
Authorizes NOAA to designate up to five Regional Ocean Workforce Partnerships to implement the National Ocean Workforce Strategy. These Partnerships would be regionally distinct consortia that serve coastal regions or areas relevant to ocean sector supply chains. Regional Ocean Workforce Partnerships would:
- Conduct regional ocean workforce assessments;
- support pathway and credential development;
- Coordinate with regional employers;
- Leverage workforce development resources for hands-on training; and
- Support coordination with existing programs, including Sea Grant, IOOS, and Cooperative Institutes.

Section 605. Federal Ocean Workforce Recognition.
Directs NOAA to coordinate with relevant other agencies to encourage consideration of supported ocean workforce credentials, certifications, and competencies in federal hiring and workforce development programs related to ocean and coastal activities, and in procurement, contracting, and cooperative agreement activities under the bill.

TITLE VII — ADVANCED RESEARCH PROJECTS AGENCY–OCEANS FEASIBILITY ASSESSMENT

Section 701. Comprehensive Assessment.
Directs NOAA to enter into an agreement with the National Academy of Sciences to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the need for and feasibility of establishing an Advanced Research Projects Agency–Oceans (ARPA-O) to complement existing federal ocean R&D. Requires the assessment to address how an ARPA-O could catalyze ocean technology research and development, evaluate governance structures, identify priority R&D project areas, and support relevant ocean workforce sectors.

TITLE VIII — OVERSIGHT AND AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS

Section 801. Government Accountability Office Review.
Requires the GAO to conduct a review of the IUU fishing pilot program, the Ocean Innovation Prize Competition program, and the ocean workforce development programs. Specifies assessment elements for each program area, including technology effectiveness and interdiction outcomes for the pilot program, commercialization rates, competition structure effectiveness, participant accessibility for the prize program, workforce outcomes, credential adoption, and Partnership effectiveness for workforce programs.

Section 802. Authorization of Appropriations.
Authorizes appropriations for the titles in the bill for fiscal years 2027 through 2031, including:

- $75,000,000 for Title II activities;
- $50,000,000 for Title III activities;
- $110,000,000 for Title IV activities;
- $150,000,000 for Title V activities;
- $125,000,000 for Title VI activities;
- $5,000,000 for the Title VII assessment;
- $5,000,000 for Title VIII activities; and
- $80,000,000 for general administration and implementation.