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MEMORANDUM FOR: NOAA Executive Council
NOAA Executive Panel

FROM: Kathryn D. Sullivan, Ph.D.
Under Secretary of Commerce for
Oceans and Atmosphere 

SUBJECT: NOAA Annual Guidance Memorandum for FY 2015

This memorandum provides guidance and fiscal assumptions for prioritizing NOAA execution, budgets, and planning in FY 2015. This guidance may be shared with staff as needed, but is strictly intended for NOAA internal use only.

A year ago September, as I prepared for my tenure as your Administrator I engaged with the Deputy Under Secretary for Operations, Assistant Administrators and my leadership team to discuss where our energy would be best spent over the coming years. In October and November I began traveling to NOAA sites to hear from the NOAA team directly what mattered most to them, what hurdles they faced and how I could support their work to meet our mission. The focused set of agency-wide priorities described below emerged from these conversations.

In my 24 April 2014 *Message from the Administrator*, I laid out the four overarching NOAA priorities that will guide our agency's work during my tenure as your Administrator. These NOAA priorities are in line with and support the Department of Commerce Strategic Plan. They are listed below along with a nested set of supporting Line Office-led and corporate focus areas that were developed during discussions I had with the Deputy Undersecretary for Operations, Assistant Administrators, and others on my leadership team. Even though a specific Line Office is designated to lead each particular focus area, I expect all offices to collaborate and coordinate on these priorities, as appropriate.

Underpinning these four NOAA priorities is my conviction that NOAA is a science-based services agency. We are nothing without great science, because our operational services rely on first-rate research and development. But our end goal is and must always be the operational services we provide to the nation; from the stewardship of living marine resources to daily weather forecasts and long range climate outlooks, from protecting places of special significance to providing nautical charts and so many others. We are this nation's Environmental Intelligence agency. We provide timely, actionable and reliable information, grounded in authoritative science that is oriented towards real-world questions confronting families, businesses, communities and nations. These are the questions that we must build answers to, and for which knowledge of Earth systems is essential. Our services also help the nation gain foresight about future conditions. We do this by harvesting the best science data and observations from everywhere and transforming these into environmental intelligence via analysis, synthesis, modeling and assessment. And all of this is designed around and driven by societal needs and real world questions.

As you develop your Line Office (LO) and Staff Office (SO) execution, budgeting, and planning documents, you are directed to develop and implement strategies and redirect resources (within existing line item authorities) to advance these priorities using the fiscal assumptions provided below. Offices should also be prepared to demonstrate what changes they are making to support the suite of priorities, including any impacts the changes will have on their other operations.

THE ADMINISTRATOR



This is a transitional year for the Strategy Execution and Evaluation (SEE) system, which is NOAA's planning, budgeting and execution system. The SEE Optimization Team will be working throughout the year to implement improvements to the system based on the recent DUS-O decisions. In August, PPI and CFO will use recommendations from the SEE Optimization Team to provide additional guidance necessary to incorporate these priorities and develop your execution, planning and budget documents for the FY 2015 SEE cycle.

Priorities:

NOAA Priority: Provide information and services to make communities more resilient.

- *Line Office-Led Focus Areas:*
 - Increase operational services that promote coastal resiliency (lead: NOS).
 - Enhance coastal intelligence by increasing the integration of science and services to provide actionable information that strengthens the resilience of communities (lead: NOS).
 - Advance earth system and ecosystem models (lead: OAR).
 - Implement the next generation stock assessment framework for NOAA-managed fish stocks and promote advancements in monitoring and data collection activities (lead: NMFS).
 - Make measurable progress on recovering protected species (lead: NMFS).

NOAA Priority: Evolve the Weather Service.

- *Line Office-Led Focus Areas:*
 - Build a Weather Ready Nation by holding ourselves accountable for the accuracy of our forecasts and ensuring people know how to react to that information (lead: NWS).
 - Create a National Weather Service that provides nationally consistent products and services and is able to manage innovation, streamline operations to research and accelerate research to operations across NOAA (lead: NWS).

NOAA Priority: Invest in observational infrastructure.

- *Line Office-Led Focus Areas:*
 - Launch JPSS and GOES-R on time and on schedule (lead: NESDIS).
 - Develop a space-based observing enterprise that is flexible, responsive to evolving technologies, and economically sustainable (lead: NESDIS).
 - Increase utilization and readiness of the NOAA Fleet to 100% within 3 years (lead: OMAO).
 - Recapitalize the NOAA fleet (lead: OMAO).

NOAA Priority: Achieve organizational excellence.

- *Line Office-Led Focus Areas:*
 - Strengthen the integration, alignment, and effectiveness of R&D that supports NOAA's operational missions, including accelerating the transition of research advances to applications (OAR).
- *Corporate Focus Area:*
 - Focus on people, teams, and tools to advance organizational excellence (lead: DUS-O)
 - Encourage diversity and recruit, engage, train, reward, and develop our people.
 - Ensure that our customers—internal and external—receive the best service possible.
 - Modernize and renovate aging facilities and provide tools for our people to do their jobs effectively, safely and legally.
 - Sustain focus on financial integrity and internal controls.

Fiscal Assumptions:

For execution, planning, and budgeting in FY 2015, use the following fiscal assumptions:

- For FY 2015, assume the FY2015 President's top line budget level amounts for both ORF and PAC; and
- For FY 2016-2019, assume zero percent growth in the FY 2015 President's top line ORF amount and assume the PAC budget profiles in the FY2015 President's Budget.