

MACOORA Annual Meeting Oct 2007

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11 Regional Associations All at various stages of maturity



The 11 Regions came together to form National Federation of Regional Associations (NFRA)

- Founded in February, 2005
- A non-profit association dedicated to:
 - Representing the needs of the 11 Regional Association to IOOS partners and others
 - Developing “one voice” for the regional perspective
 - Education through communication of lessons learned, success stories

The Critical Issue: Funding

- FY07 -- Transition from earmarks to competitive funding
 - IOOS BAA -- \$14.9 m awarded to 23 regional programs, including 11 RCOOS development awards (5 multi year awards and 6 single year awards).
 - IOOS RA awards -- \$4.4 m being competed now. All 11 RAs have submitted proposals.
- FY 08 – possible amounts include:
 - Senate mark = \$29m
 - House and Pres. Budget = \$11.5m
 - Possible compromise = \$17.5 (could be any number)
 - No one knows when Congress will enact a budget but rumors are it could be late this year and may end up as a omnibus or mini-bus bill.
- NOAA needs ~ \$11 m to fulfill out year obligations of existing grants.
- Bottom line - Need at least the Senate mark to keep IOOS moving forward. RAs should prepare contingency plans for different scenarios

IOOS Legislation

- **House passes IOOS legislation!** The House Energy Bill, HR 3221 "New Direction for Energy Independence, National Security, and Consumer Protection Act" includes the Allen IOOS legislation as Section 7473 of the bill, "Enhancing Climate Change Predictions."
 - House Bill differs from the Senate version but retains many of the key elements sought by NFRA and others as key to moving IOOS forward:
 - NORLC will establish an Interagency Working Group (IWG), responsible for overseeing IOOS.
 - An interagency program office is housed in NOAA, reports to the IWG
 - NOAA is the lead federal agency
 - Tort liability for dissemination of data by certified regions
 - Allows federal employees to participate in RAs
 - Renames RAs to "Regional Information Coordination Entities" (doesn't change purpose -- and, no, we can't explain why they insisted on this term)
- **Senate** – expected to introduce bill early this fall. Similar language has been adopted by the Senate twice before so it is expected to pass.

Comparison of IOOS Bills

	S 950	HR 2337
Oversight	NORLC	NORLC
IWG	Not required	Yes
IPO	In NOAA	In NOAA
NOAA Lead	Yes	Yes
Regions	RAs and RCOOS	RICEs
Adv Panel	No	Yes
Liability	Yes	Yes
Fed Participation on RA	Yes	Yes
Interagency Fin.	Yes	Yes
Authorization amount	Up to \$150,000	No

Critical Issues for IOOS RAs

- **FUNDING!** Key to sustain existing capacity in all regions to build a national system.
- **Transition to contracts** – NOAA wants to shift from grants to contracts to fund regional operations. Contracts require deliverables on a specified schedule while grants tend to be open-ended and are traditionally used for research projects. **Key issues:**
 - Merge funding for RAs and RCOOS into one funding vehicle
 - Multi-year awards (3-5 years)
 - Regional competition of awards (regions conduct bids for operation of system)
- **RA Certification**
 - NOAA is interested in exploring other vehicles to accomplishing goals of certification rather than a lengthy formal certification process. For example, an eligibility requirement for competing for a contract would be the completion of a business plan and governance structure. Certification for DMAC compliance would also be part of the contracting arrangement
- **Conceptual Designs**
 - Conceptual designs needed for RA business plans and to articulate the regional contribution to IOOS.

Summary

- **FY08 is a critical time for IOOS.** Many of the elements of the program are coming together at the federal and regional level but funding is needed to ensure we don't lose what has been developed to date.

