Regional Studies: Chesapeake Bay

NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service requests an increase of $5M for a total of $7.1M for the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (NCBO) to support the Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration Executive Order 13508 (EO). This budget request supports NOAA and the Department of Commerce's efforts to conserve, protect, and manage living marine resources in a way that ensures their continuation as functioning components of marine ecosystems, affords economic opportunities, and enhances the quality of life for the American public. These funds will be targeted to provide enhanced understanding of the relationships between the Chesapeake Bay's living resources and habitat, coordinate protection and restoration of key species and habitats across jurisdictional lines, and support a coordinated system of monitoring platforms distributed across the Bay. This funding will ensure NOAA has state-of-the-art field and laboratory equipment in place in FY 2011, and the base funding required to address the mandates of the EO in FY 2012 and beyond.

NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office and the Executive Order

The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (NCBO) provides state-of-the-art science, technical assistance, funding, and environmental literacy programs to protect and restore the nation's valuable Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. On May 12, 2009, President Obama signed an Executive Order that recognizes the Chesapeake Bay as a national treasure and calls on the federal government to lead a renewed effort to restore and protect the nation's largest estuary and its watershed. The Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration Executive Order directs NOAA to respond to the impacts of climate change, accelerate habitat restoration, support living resources, and expand monitoring/observations to inform decision making to protect the Bay.

FY 2011 Highlights

Habitat Characterization and Restoration

Of the $5 million requested, $2.2 million is slated to procure field assets such as survey vessels and mapping equipment to support habitat characterization/assessment activities. These activities will lay the groundwork for successful implementation of the EO, including restoration of native oysters in key Bay tributaries by 2020 and delivering data for strategic targeting of habitat restoration and protection priorities.

Ecosystem Assessment & Fisheries Science Integration

NMFS requests an increase of $2.3 million to enhance scientific and laboratory applications as well as geospatial modeling capacity. These improvements will strengthen NOAA's ability to meet EO mandates through spatial planning, modeling, and disease monitoring to locate restoration projects where they will be successful.

Improving Chesapeake Bay Observations

NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Interpretive Buoy System (CBIBS) monitors and transmits real-time data about the Bay's changing weather, oceanographic and water quality conditions. This information is used by weather forecasters, marine safety personnel, scientists and recreational fishermen and boaters. CBIBS helps NOAA and our partners to strengthen scientific support for decision making to restore the Bay and monitor the impacts of climate change.

In FY2011, with the additional $500,000, NCBO will incorporate CBIBS into the Integrated Ocean Observing System regional network; provide support for the operation and maintenance of buoys; and collect, organize, analyze and deliver CBIBS data.