



March 30, 2009

Integrated Ocean Observing bill signed into law by President Obama

On March 24, 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act of 2009, a bill that includes authorization for the Integrated Ocean Observation System (IOOS) as part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The public lands bill had passed the Senate earlier in the month and was signed into law today by President Obama.

This represents a major step forward for IOOS. It establishes IOOS as a formal program and recognizes the regional systems, including the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS), as a key part of that program. The legislation also remedies some issues for the program such as providing liability coverage to the regions for data dissemination, establishing procedures for transferring money between federal agencies, and establishing NOAA as the lead federal agency.

While the legislation does not secure appropriations for IOOS (that is done under a different process) it does establish the program in statute. Without this authorizing legislation, IOOS was vulnerable to shifting priorities of NOAA and the Department of Commerce, particularly during lean economic times when funds are scarce. The legislation is a clear statement that Congress believes that IOOS is a valuable and necessary program.

This quarterly newsletter is prepared by GLOS as a service to its members, partners and the broader Great Lakes community. Please refer to www.glos.us for more information on GLOS products, activities and milestones.

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