



**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**  
**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**  
**NATIONAL OCEAN SERVICE**  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear IOOS Regional Partners and Stakeholders,

This letter conveys agency priorities and principles that will guide IOOS funding decisions in FY08.

At a fundamental level, the fidelity of the IOOS Program depends on its ability to follow through on commitments. The Program's viability also requires a return on investments. Therefore, pending an FY08 appropriation, NOAA is committed to continue funding for the already competed 17 multi-year projects awarded in FY07. However, the FY08 appropriation for regional IOOS is likely to be lower than the level needed to sustain the 17 multi-year projects at their requested levels. As a result, some adjustments may be required. NOAA will make every effort to fund projects at a level that will facilitate successful outcomes.

In addition to supporting the multi-year awards, NOAA will continue to support the RAs whose current funding expires in spring 2008. Without RA support, there is no integration of existing regional observing capacity and no cohesive identification and prioritization of end-user requirements.

Finally, NOAA remains committed to funding all new grants, contracts and agreements through competitive processes. In July, NOAA issued an FY08 Omnibus notice (Federal Register Vol. 72, No. 126) that includes funding opportunities for RA support and implementation of Regional IOOS. Of course, our ability to support new opportunities is dependent on actual appropriations.

Even under the most optimistic funding scenarios NOAA will not be able to fully support all pre-existing grants, the regional associations and new activities as proposed by respondents to the FY08 Omnibus Notice. However, I believe it is better to convey fiscal realities that allow our stakeholders to make the best decisions possible with the information currently available. NOAA is fully committed to developing a national network of regional coastal ocean observing systems; however, all indications are that we will have to do so in a gradual and phased manner.

Sincerely,

Zdenka S. Willis  
Director, NOAA Integrated Ocean Observing System Program

