

NOAA Organic Act

Executive Summary

This legislative proposal recognizes the importance of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) by enshrining it in law and establishing it as an independent, standalone agency within the executive branch.

Establishes the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NOAA was created by executive order in 1970 and has never been established in law. It currently resides within the Department of Commerce. This proposed legislation would make it an independent agency—establishing a NOAA Administrator and giving NOAA formal statutory authority.

Promotes Scientific Integrity and Strategic Research

The bill directs the NOAA Administrator to promote a culture of scientific integrity and enshrines NOAA's existing Science Advisory Board in legislation. It also requires the Board to develop a strategic plan for NOAA's research and development activities every five years.

Preserves and Supports the National Weather Service's Work Within NOAA

The bill will enshrine the National Weather Service within the independent NOAA agency. It supports NWS's critical work providing forecasts, monitoring severe weather, and communicating weather information to local, state, and federal authorities.

Consolidates NOAA's Mission

The bill affirms the location of the Office of Space Commerce within the Department of Commerce by requiring the Director of the Office to report directly to the Secretary of Commerce.

Additionally, the bill directs a study by the National Academy of Public Administration to determine the feasibility and merits of transferring all or parts of Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act management functions into a single agency or department in the federal government.

Directs Efficient Reorganization

The bill requires NOAA to submit a reorganization plan that will prioritize how NOAA can best carry out its core mission while promoting collaboration and reducing duplication within the agency. It also requires that one year after the legislation is enacted, NOAA must give Congress recommendations on any other legislation needed to help the transition to an independent agency.