



May 22, 2023

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) FY2024 Budget Request and Appropriations

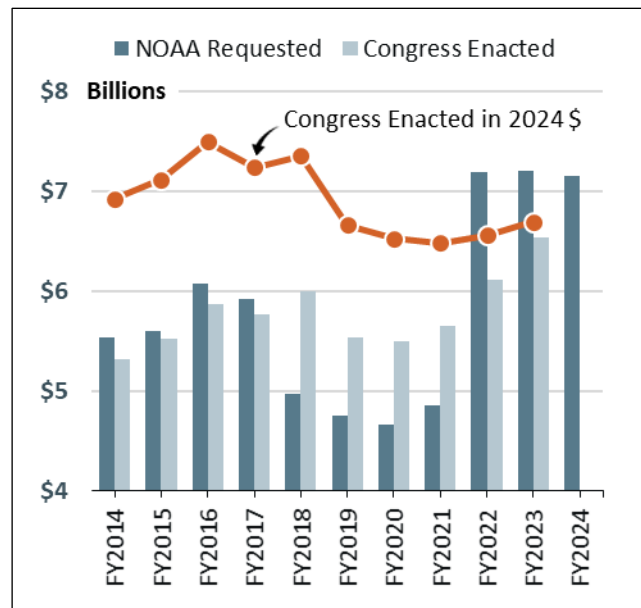
The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is an agency in the Department of Commerce whose mission is to understand and predict changes in weather, climate, oceans, and coasts; to share that information with others; and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources. NOAA’s work is divided among six line offices: National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS); National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS); National Ocean Service (NOS); National Weather Service (NWS); Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR); and Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO). NOAA also provides planning, leadership, finances, information technology, educational programming, and other support across the line offices, known as Mission Support (MS).

Congress provides NOAA with annual mandatory and discretionary appropriations. Mandatory appropriations, which generally comprise a small percentage of total NOAA funding, are disbursed to various accounts that support programs in NOS, NMFS, and OMAO. NOAA’s discretionary appropriations typically are included in the annual Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations acts. Discretionary appropriations support two broad accounts—Operations, Research, and Facilities (ORF) and Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction (PAC)—as well as a few smaller accounts. This product focuses on NOAA’s FY2024 discretionary funding for ORF and PAC. The product also notes potential topics of interest for Congress, including NOAA’s satellite operations, science and data for economic development, and climate-related products and services.

Agency Funding

NOAA requested \$7.15 billion in discretionary *direct obligations* for ORF and PAC for FY2024, including \$6.76 billion in appropriations (**Figure 1** and **Table 1**; NOAA requested a total of \$7.34 billion in direct obligations). Direct obligations include annual appropriations, transfers, and recoveries from prior year obligations. For FY2023, Congress provided \$6.54 billion in annual ORF and PAC direct obligations and an additional \$150.8 million in supplemental funding through P.L. 117-328, for a total of \$6.69 billion (**Table 1**). According to NOAA, the supplemental amounts are considered “base or discretionary funding designated as emergency.” Additional supplemental appropriations are described in the right column. **Figure 1** does not show the supplemental appropriations. The NOAA FY2024 requested direct obligations amount for ORF and PAC is \$461.1 million above the FY2023 enacted level.

Figure 1. ORF and PAC Annual Direct Obligations, FY2014-FY2024 (\$ in billions, nominal and adjusted)



Sources: CRS, from NOAA budget justifications, congressional explanatory statements, and Office of Management and Budget, *Historical Tables, Table 10.1*.

Notes: ORF = Operations, Research, and Facilities; PAC = Procurement, Acquisition, and Construction. Figure does not include supplemental appropriations. Direct obligations include appropriations, transfers, and recoveries from prior year obligations.

Supplemental Appropriations Available in FY2024

Congress also has provided NOAA with supplemental appropriations for ORF and PAC to remain available through FY2024 or beyond, including

- \$52.2 million for PAC expenses related to hurricanes and wildfires in 2020 and 2021 (P.L. 117-43);
- \$2.23 billion for restoration, observation, modeling, forecasting activities, and other purposes (Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act [IIJA]; P.L. 117-58);
- \$3.31 billion for conservation, restoration, protection, construction, reviews, research and forecasting, computing capacity, aircraft acquisition, and other purposes (Inflation Reduction Act of 2022; P.L. 117-169); and
- \$527.5 million for expenses related to hurricanes, typhoons, flooding, and wildfires in 2022; fishing gear and techniques; aircraft acquisition and other uses (P.L. 117-328, of which \$150.8 million is included in **Table 1** amounts).

Table I. NOAA Annual Direct Obligations and Appropriations for Discretionary ORF and PAC Accounts
(\$ in millions, nominal)

Line Office and CPF/CDS	FY2023 Enacted ^a	FY2024 Base Level ^b	FY2024 Request ^b	FY2024 Enacted
NESDIS	1,705.7	1,716.5	2,073.9	NA
NMFS	1,093.3	1,161.7	1,154.9	NA
NOS	693.4	744.4	687.7	NA
NWS	1,356.7	1,403.9	1,380.1	NA
OAR	761.3	792.0	786.3	NA
OMAO	460.7	469.9	459.0	NA
Mission Support	503.8	533.5	605.6	NA
CPF/CDS	111.5	NA	NA	NA
Total Direct Obligations^c	6,686.4	6,821.9	7,147.4	NA
Total Appropriations^d	6,305.5	6,430.8	6,756.3	NA

Sources: CRS using the explanatory statement accompanying P.L. 117-328; NOAA, *Budget Estimates Fiscal Year 2024, Congressional Submission*.

Notes: CPF/CDS = community project funding/congressionally directed spending; NA = not available/not applicable. See text for additional abbreviations. Components may not sum to totals shown due to rounding.

- As documented in the explanatory statement accompanying P.L. 117-328. Amounts include both FY2023 annual direct obligations and the supplemental appropriations in Division N, Title II.
- As documented in the NOAA FY2024 Budget Estimates. NOAA calculated the FY2024 base level as equal to the FY2023 enacted amount plus expected “Adjustments-To-Base,” such as certain inflationary adjustments.
- Total Direct Obligations*, or total program or funding levels, include annual appropriations, transfers, and recoveries from prior year obligations, but exclude any supplemental appropriations, except *FY2023 Enacted* includes some supplemental appropriations from Division N, Title II, of P.L. 117-328.
- Total Appropriations* are a part of the total direct obligations. *Total Appropriations* include annual appropriations but exclude any supplemental appropriations, except *FY2023 Enacted* includes some supplemental appropriations from Division N, Title II, of P.L. 117-328.

Issues for Congress

NOAA’s FY2024 requested budget proposed changes to multiple activities, the largest portion of which was increased funding for certain satellites, science and data for economic development activities, and climate products and services, among other activities. The agency proposed reducing or eliminating funding for several activities, across all of the line offices, including for the National Coastal Resilience Fund (to be funded with monies from IJJA), for OMAO ship and aircraft construction and maintenance (to be funded with previously enacted funds), and for some grant programs in NMFS, NOS, and NWS (to fund other priorities).

Satellite Operations

NOAA, through NESDIS, manages several portfolios of environmental satellites. The agency requested \$2.1 billion for NESDIS in FY2024, an increase of \$368.3 million above the FY2023 enacted level (**Table 1**). The request includes an increase of \$158.9 million (\$342.4 million total) for the Polar Weather Satellites (PWS) program and \$132.4 million (\$417.4 million total) for the Geostationary Extended Observations (GeoXO) program. PWS includes the Joint Polar Satellite System and Polar Follow-On missions, which provide global meteorological observations for short- and midterm forecasts and weather warnings. GeoXO is the next generation of space-based weather and environmental monitoring (e.g., wildfires, smoke, fog).

Congress provided a total of \$183.5 million for PWS and \$285.0 million for GeoXO in FY2023.

Science and Data for Economic Development

NOAA requested \$81.4 million above the FY2024 base level, across NMFS, NOS, NWS, OAR, and MS, for activities to “foster environmental stewardship and optimize advances in science and technology to create value-added, data-driven sustainable economic development, with a particular focus on the New Blue Economy.” The agency requested the largest increases under this theme to improve space situational awareness (i.e., keeping track of objects in orbit; \$17.7 million increase) and support the national program to mitigate the effects of offshore wind energy activities on NMFS scientific surveys (\$14.6 million). NOAA has previously requested additional funding for similar activities; Congress provided some of the funds requested in FY2023.

Climate Products and Services

NOAA requested \$78.2 million above the FY2024 base level, across all of the line offices, for activities to implement Executive Order 14008, “Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad.” The largest proposed increases would provide additional funding to the National Marine Sanctuary System (\$17.8 million) and support at-sea data collection and other critical mission requirements (\$16.2 million).

Eva Lipiec, Analyst in Natural Resources Policy

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.