



National Association of Marine Laboratories

c/o Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, MA 02543

Dr. Jeffrey M. Reutter, President

Ohio Sea Grant College Program & FT Stone Laboratory
The Ohio State University, 1314 Kinnear Rd.
Columbus, OH 43212

(614) 292-8949; FAX: 292-4364

Email: reutter.1@osu.edu

www.naml.org

www.sg.ohio-state.edu

July 8, 2005

Dr. Warren M. Washington
Chairman
National Science Board
4201 Wilson Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22230

Dear Dr. Washington:

At its June 2005 meeting, the National Science Board (NSB) adopted a prioritized list of potential new projects for the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Major Research Equipment and Facilities Construction (MREFC) account. The NSB approved list includes the Ocean Observing Initiative (OOI) - just as it did last year. We recognize that prioritizing major research equipment and facilities projects that span diverse disciplines is not an easy task, and we applaud the Board for its efforts. We are also appreciative that the OOI was once again supported by the Board.

At the NSB's next meeting in August, the Board will be asked to approve a draft NSF budget for fiscal year 2007 which will then be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget. The National Association of Marine Laboratories (NAML), through the actions of its Board of Directors and Public Policy Committee, wish to express its wholehearted support for the OOI. We call on the Board and NSF to include the OOI as a proposed new start in NSF's fiscal year 2007 budget request for the MREFC account.

As a nonprofit organization of over 120 member institutions representing coastal, marine, and Great Lakes laboratories in every coastal state, stretching from Guam to Bermuda and Alaska to Puerto Rico, NAML recognizes the value of thorough and comprehensive observations of the world's oceans and coasts and supports the OOI as a transformative platform for the next generation of science in this field. For years, through its unique national and regional networks and partnerships, NAML members have been actively involved in ocean, coastal, and Great Lakes science observations. This broad-reaching network of marine laboratories also acts as an interface between the science of the oceans and the education and outreach activities that create social value from that science.

The tsunami that swept across the Indian Ocean last winter is only one of many situations that demonstrate that the integrated observation of the world's oceans and coasts is necessary for addressing critical issues, such as the health of humans and marine life, weather and climate nowcasts and forecasts, homeland security, and resource management. Implementation of the OOI would provide the ocean and coastal research and education communities with unique opportunities to conduct science in a way heretofore impossible, by accessing a much broader range of time and space scales through the use of advanced technological instrumentation and

The National Association of Marine Laboratories (NAML) is a nonprofit organization of over 120 member institutions representing coastal, marine, and Great Lakes laboratories in every coastal state, stretching from Guam to Bermuda and Alaska to Puerto Rico. Members serve as unique "windows on the sea," providing information on the rich environmental mosaic of coastal habitats as well as offshore oceanic regions and the Great Lakes. NAML member laboratories conduct research and provide a variety of academic, education and public service programs to enable local and regional communities to better understand and manage the ocean, coastal and Great Lake environments. NAML is comprised of three regional associations: the Northeastern Association of Marine and Great Lakes Laboratories (NEAMGLL); the Southern Association of Marine Laboratories (SAML); and the Western Association of Marine Laboratories (WAML).

infrastructure, including re-locatable deep-sea buoys, a cabled seafloor network, and an expanded network of coastal observatories. The OOI will allow our communities to address multi-scale phenomena and gain the kind of system-level understanding that can lead to a predictive capability for the dynamics of these important systems.

As the nation and the world move toward a more integrated set of earth observing systems, the significance of the OOI will only become more important. New knowledge and new technologies that will come from the OOI will be transferred to an operational national Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). In turn, these technologies will eventually be incorporated into a comprehensive Earth Observing System, such as the Global Earth Observing System of Systems (GEOSS). This makes the OOI a critical tool in the effort to create a real understanding of our ocean systems and for translating the operational data from the IOOS and GEOSS into tools to help humankind. When implemented, the OOI will have the capacity to lay the groundwork, at the regional level and beyond, for vitally important national and global observing networks which are currently under development.

We urge you to support the Ocean Observatories Initiative and hope you will agree that it should be one of the highest priorities in the MREFC account in the fiscal year 2007 budget for NSF. We believe the science to be derived from the OOI will be of vital importance not only for the new knowledge it will generate, but for the applications that will likely ensue from this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to convey these views.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey M. Reutter
President

National Association of Marine Laboratories

cc: Dr. Diana Natalicio, Vice Chair, National Science Board
Dr. Daniel Simberloff, Chairman, NSB Committee on Plans and Programs
Dr. Ray Bowen, Chairman, NSB Committee on Strategy and Budget
Dr. Arden Bement, Director, National Science Foundation
Dr. Michael Crosby, Executive Officer, National Science Board