

Union Calendar No. 471

106TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 2090

[Report No. 106-810]

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to contract with the National Academy of Sciences to establish the Coordinated Oceanographic Program Advisory Panel to report to the Congress on the feasibility and social value of a coordinated oceanography program.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 9, 1999

Mr. GREENWOOD (for himself, Mr. SAXTON, Mr. FARR of California, Mr. GILCHREST, Mr. ROMERO-BARCELO, Mr. SENSENBRENNER, Mr. UNDERWOOD, Mrs. MORELLA, Mrs. CAPPs, Mr. CALVERT, Mr. ENGLISH, Mr. BLUMENAUER, Mr. FOLEY, Mr. EHLERS, Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey, Mr. BILBRAY, and Mr. GUTIERREZ) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Resources

SEPTEMBER 6, 2000

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on June 19, 1999]

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to contract with the National Academy of Sciences to establish the Coordinated Oceanographic Program Advisory Panel to report to the Congress on the feasibility and social value of a coordinated oceanography program.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 *This Act may be cited as the “Exploration of the Seas*
5 *Act”.*

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 *Congress finds the following:*

8 *(1) During the past 100 years, scientists working*
9 *with marine fossils, both underwater and high in the*
10 *mountains, have traced the origins of life on Earth to*
11 *the sea, beginning approximately 3 billion years ago.*
12 *Today, life on our planet remains dependent on the*
13 *vitality of the sea.*

14 *(2) More than two-thirds of the Earth’s surface*
15 *is covered by water, with oceans and inland seas ac-*
16 *counting for almost 140 million square miles.*

17 *(3) The United Nations forecasts a worldwide*
18 *population of 8.9 billion by the year 2050, a 50 per-*
19 *cent increase from 5.9 billion in 1999. As this trend*
20 *in population growth continues, increasing demands*
21 *will be placed on ocean and coastal resources, not*
22 *only as a result of population growth in coastal re-*
23 *gions, but also from the need to harvest increasing*
24 *amounts of marine life as a source of food to satisfy*
25 *world protein requirements, and from the mining of*

1 *energy-producing materials from offshore resource de-*
2 *posits.*

3 *(4) The ocean remains one of the Earth's last*
4 *unexplored frontiers. It has stirred our imaginations*
5 *over the millennia, led to the discovery of new lands,*
6 *immense mineral deposits, and reservoirs of other re-*
7 *sources, and produced startling scientific findings.*
8 *Recognizing the importance of the marine environ-*
9 *ment, the need for scientific exploration to expand our*
10 *knowledge of the world's oceans is crucial if we are*
11 *to ensure that the marine environment will be man-*
12 *aged sustainably.*

13 *(5) The seas possess enormous economic and en-*
14 *vironmental importance. Some ocean resources, such*
15 *as fisheries and minerals, are well recognized. Oil use*
16 *has increased dramatically in recent times, and the*
17 *sea bed holds large deposits of largely undiscovered re-*
18 *serves. Other ocean resources offer promise for the fu-*
19 *ture. In addition to fossil fuels, the ocean floor con-*
20 *tains deposits of gravel, sand, manganese crusts and*
21 *nodules, tin, gold, and diamonds. Marine mineral re-*
22 *sources are extensive, yet poorly understood.*

23 *(6) The oceans also offer rich untapped potential*
24 *for medications. Marine plants and animals possess*
25 *inestimable potential in the treatment of human ill-*

1 *nesses. Coral reefs, sometimes described as the rain*
2 *forests of the sea, contain uncommon chemicals that*
3 *may be used to fight diseases for which scientists have*
4 *not yet found a cure, such as cancer, acquired im-*
5 *munodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), and diabetes.*
6 *While the number of new chemical compounds that*
7 *can be derived from land based plants and microbial*
8 *fermentation is limited, scientists have only just*
9 *begun to explore the sea's vast molecular potential.*

10 *(7) In spite of the development of new tech-*
11 *nologies, comparatively little of the ocean has been*
12 *studied. The leadership role of the United States has*
13 *been eroded by a gradual decrease in funding support,*
14 *even while public opinion surveys indicate that ocean*
15 *exploration is at least as important as space explo-*
16 *ration.*

17 *(8) The National Academy of Sciences has the*
18 *means by which to study and make determinations*
19 *regarding the adoption and establishment of a coordi-*
20 *nated oceanography program for the exploration of*
21 *the seas, in which the National Oceanic and Atmos-*
22 *pheric Administration could participate in a role*
23 *similar to that of the National Aeronautics and Space*
24 *Administration with regard to the International*
25 *Space Station.*

1 **SEC. 3. COORDINATED OCEANOGRAPHIC PROGRAM ADVI-**
2 **SORY PANEL.**

3 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—Not later than 60 days after the
4 date of enactment of this Act and subject to the availability
5 of appropriations, the Secretary of Commerce shall contract
6 with the National Academy of Sciences to establish the Co-
7 ordinated Oceanography Program Advisory Panel (in this
8 Act referred to as the “Panel”), comprised of experts in
9 ocean studies, including individuals with academic experi-
10 ence in oceanography, marine biology, marine geology, ich-
11 thyology, and ocean related economics.

12 (b) *CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.*—The
13 Panel shall elect a chairperson and a vice-chairperson.

14 (c) *TERMINATION.*—The Panel shall cease to exist 30
15 days after submitting its final report and recommendations
16 pursuant to section 4.

17 **SEC. 4. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**

18 (a) *IN GENERAL.*—No later than 18 months after its
19 establishment, the Panel shall report to the Committee on
20 Resources of the House of Representatives and the Com-
21 mittee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the
22 Senate on the feasibility and social value of a coordinated
23 oceanography program. In preparing its report, the Panel
24 shall examine existing oceanographic efforts and the level
25 of coordination or cooperation between and among partici-
26 pating countries and institutions.

1 (b) *INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP.*—*To assist in making*
2 *its feasibility determination under subsection (a), the Panel*
3 *shall convene an international workshop with participation*
4 *from interested nations and a broad range of persons rep-*
5 *resenting scientists, engineers, policy makers, regulators, in-*
6 *dustry, and other interested parties.*

7 (c) *FINAL REPORT.*—*The Panel shall include in its*
8 *final report recommendations for a national oceans explo-*
9 *ration strategy, which will—*

10 (1) *define objectives and priorities, and note im-*
11 *portant scientific, historic, and cultural sites;*

12 (2) *promote collaboration among research orga-*
13 *nizations;*

14 (3) *examine the potential for new ocean explo-*
15 *ration technologies;*

16 (4) *describe those areas of study in which na-*
17 *tional or international oceanographic cooperation is*
18 *currently being undertaken;*

19 (5) *identify areas of study in which knowledge of*
20 *the oceans is inadequate;*

21 (6) *ensure coordination with the National Oce-*
22 *anic and Atmospheric Administration's Marine Pro-*
23 *tected Area Center;*

1 (7) *ensure that newly discovered organisms with*
2 *medicinal or commercial potential are identified for*
3 *possible research and development; and*

4 (8) *identify countries and organizations that*
5 *would be likely to participate in a coordinated ocean-*
6 *ography program.*

7 (d) *IMPLEMENTATION.—If the Panel determines that*
8 *a coordinated oceanography program is feasible and has*
9 *significant value for advancing mankind’s knowledge of the*
10 *ocean, the Panel shall include in its final report rec-*
11 *ommendations for implementing such program, including*
12 *recommendations regarding—*

13 (1) *the institutional arrangements, treaties, or*
14 *laws necessary to implement a coordinated oceanog-*
15 *raphy program;*

16 (2) *the methods and incentives needed to secure*
17 *cooperation and commitments from participating na-*
18 *tions to ensure that the benefit that each nation that*
19 *is a party to any international agreement estab-*
20 *lishing a coordinated oceanography program receives*
21 *is contingent upon meeting the nation’s obligations*
22 *(financial and otherwise) under such an agreement;*

23 (3) *the costs associated with establishing a co-*
24 *ordinated oceanography program;*

1 (4) *the types of undersea vehicles, ships, observ-*
2 *ing systems, or other equipment that would be nec-*
3 *essary to operate a coordinated oceanography pro-*
4 *gram; and*

5 (5) *how utilization of aboriginal observational*
6 *data and other historical information may be best in-*
7 *corporated into a coordinated oceanography program.*

8 **SEC. 5. OBTAINING DATA.**

9 *Subject to national security restrictions, the Panel*
10 *may obtain from any department or agency of the United*
11 *States information necessary to enable it to carry out this*
12 *Act. Upon request of the chairperson of the Panel, the head*
13 *of any department or agency shall furnish that information*
14 *at no cost to the Panel.*

15 **SEC. 6. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

16 *There are authorized to be appropriated for the pur-*
17 *poses of carrying out this Act, and to remain available until*
18 *expended, \$1,500,000.*

Union Calendar No. 741

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 2090

[Report No. 106-810]

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of Commerce to contract with the National Academy of Sciences to establish the Coordinated Oceanographic Program Advisory Panel to report to the Congress on the feasibility and social value of a coordinated oceanography program.

SEPTEMBER 6, 2000

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed