

 Chapter/ Region

Surfrider Foundation

 Mailing Address

Insert Date, 2017

House/ Senate Member

Mailing Address

Washington D.C.

**Re: Support for EPA and NOAA budgets to support clean water, public health, and ocean and coastal management**

Dear Representative,

The Surfrider Foundation is a grassroots environmental organization dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world’s ocean, waves, and beaches for all people. The Surfrider Foundation [insert your chapter name] Chapter represents thousands of members, volunteers, and supporters working to protect coastal and marine resources in [your state].

The Surfrider Foundation urges you to support critical funding for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) so these agencies can fulfill their mandates related to clean water, public health, and management of our nation’s ocean and coasts. The President’s budget proposal for fiscal year 2018 includes a 31% reduction to the EPA’s budget and a 16% reduction to the Department of Commerce, much of that targeted at NOAA. These proposed cuts would undermine the ability of both agencies to protect vital public resources that support our nation’s coastal communities and economies..

In particular, Surfrider requests that you support funding for the following programs, which are not included in the President’s FY 2018 Budget:

* **EPA’s BEACH Grants Program** authorized under the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health (BEACH) Act. The BEACH Grants Program provides federal assistance to coastal states and territories to monitor water quality at beaches and to notify the public when bacteria levels exceed health standards. Elimination of EPA’s BEACH Grant Program will not only leave beachgoers at risk, but also threaten our nation’s coastal recreation and tourism sector valued at over $100 billion by the National Ocean and Economics Program.
* **NOAA’s Coastal Zone Management Program** authorized by the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA). The program achieves multiple goals for states and coastal communities including economic development, enhancement of public access and recreation, and protection of coastal resources. The program provides federal support for state programs to manage uses of their own coastlines and submerged lands and ensure federal actions are consistent with state laws. Moreover, the CZMA requires a dollar-for-dollar state match for almost all federal funding, with states matching over $59 million FY2016.
* **NOAA’s Coastal Resilience Program**, which provides tools and resources for communities to address the impacts of extreme weather and climate-related hazards. This includes support for projects that protect life and property, safeguard people and infrastructure, strengthen the economy, and conserve and restore coastal and marine resources. The program has also supported regional ocean planning to ensure a coordinated approach to the development and conservation of our marine ecosystems.
* **NOAA’s Sea Grant Program,** which encompasses anetwork of 33 programs located in every coastal state, Puerto Rico, Lake Champlain and Guam. These programs engage over 300 institutions involving more than 3,000 scientists, engineers, educators, students and outreach experts to address issues such as coastal hazards, sustainable coastal development and seafood safety.

In addition, we are concerned that budget cuts to both the EPA and NOAA will impact climate change research and data. For example, we know the U.S. Global Change Research Program, which produces the country’s most comprehensive report on climate change, is on the chopping block. Cuts to NOAA’s satellite programs will also greatly impact climate research now, and into the future.

The programs highlighted above are just some of the critical funding gaps not included in the President’s budget proposal for 2018. Given the importance of the EPA and NOAA, we urge Congress to fund both agencies at current levels or higher in FY 2018. Providing sufficient funding for both agencies is a smart investment that will help protect our nation’s coastal communities and ocean economy valued at $359 billion in gross domestic product.

Thank you for your consideration. For more information on the Surfrider Foundation, visit www.surfrider.org.

Sincerely,

Chapter/ Staff representatives