

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3952

To strengthen the role of the Chief Scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in order to promote scientific integrity and advance the Administration’s world-class research and development portfolio.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 16, 2021

Ms. SHERRILL (for herself and Mr. FEENSTRA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To strengthen the role of the Chief Scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in order to promote scientific integrity and advance the Administration’s world-class research and development portfolio.

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 “NOAA Chief Scientist
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO THE REORGANIZATION PLAN NO. 4**
2 **OF 1970.**

3 Section 2(d) of Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1970
4 (5 U.S.C. App) is amended—

5 (1) by inserting after the first sentence the fol-
6 lowing: “The President shall, in appointing the Chief
7 Scientist, give due consideration to any recommenda-
8 tions for appointments which may be submitted by
9 the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering,
10 and Medicine, the National Oceanic and Atmos-
11 pheric Administration Science Advisory Board, or by
12 other widely-recognized and reputable scientific or
13 educational organizations.”;

14 (2) after “principal scientific advisor to the Ad-
15 ministrator”, by inserting “on cross-cutting science
16 and technology policy and strategy”;

17 (3) after “to the work of the Administration”,
18 by inserting “, and who has produced work of sci-
19 entific merit through an established record of distin-
20 guished service and achievement highly respected by
21 the scientific community”; and

22 (4) by adding at the end the following: “The
23 Chief Scientist shall—

24 “(1)(A) provide written consent to all applicable
25 scientific integrity policies of the Administration
26 prior to appointment, with such written consent to

1 be made available on a publicly accessible website of
2 the Administration;

3 “(B) in conjunction with the Administrator and
4 other members of Administration leadership, under-
5 go all applicable training programs of the Adminis-
6 tration which inform employees of their rights and
7 responsibilities regarding the conduct of scientific re-
8 search and communication with the media and the
9 public regarding scientific research; and

10 “(C) in coordination with the Administrator
11 and other members of Administration leadership,
12 make all practicable efforts to ensure that Adminis-
13 tration employees and contractors who are engaged
14 in, supervise, or manage scientific activities, analyze
15 or communicate information resulting from scientific
16 activities, or use scientific information in policy,
17 management, or regulatory decisions, adhere to es-
18 tablished scientific integrity policies of the Adminis-
19 tration;

20 “(2) provide policy and program direction for
21 science and technology priorities at the Administra-
22 tion and facilitate integration and coordination of re-
23 search efforts across line offices of the Administra-
24 tion, with other Federal agencies, and with the ex-
25 ternal scientific community, including through—

1 “(A) leading the development of science
2 strategy at the Administration and issuing pol-
3 icy guidance to ensure that overarching Admin-
4 istration policy is aligned with science goals and
5 objectives;

6 “(B) chairing the National Oceanic and
7 Atmospheric Administration Science Council
8 and serving as principal liaison to the National
9 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
10 Science Advisory Board;

11 “(C) providing oversight to ensure that the
12 Administration funds only the highest-priority,
13 most exemplary, meritorious, and mission-driv-
14 en science, including through partnerships with
15 the private sector, Cooperative Institutes, aca-
16 demia, non-governmental organizations, and
17 other Federal and non-Federal institutions, and
18 that there is no duplication of research efforts;

19 “(D) ensuring the Administration attracts,
20 retains, and promotes world class scientists and
21 researchers;

22 “(E) promoting the health and professional
23 development of the Administration’s scientific
24 workforce; and

1 “(F) advancing diversity, equity, and inclu-
2 sion in the Administration’s scientific workforce
3 and its conduct and application of science;

4 “(3) under the direction of the Administrator,
5 promote, communicate, and advocate for the Admin-
6 istration’s science portfolio and strategy to the broad
7 external and international community and Congress,
8 represent the Administration in promoting and
9 maintaining good public and community relations,
10 and provide the widest practical and appropriate dis-
11 semination of information concerning the climate,
12 weather, oceans, fisheries, and coasts;

13 “(4) manage an Office of the Chief Scientist—

14 “(A) which shall be staffed by rotating ca-
15 reer employees of the Administration, serving
16 terms not greater than four years, in a manner
17 that promotes diversity, equity, inclusion, lead-
18 ership, and professional development, such that,
19 to the maximum extent practicable, each line
20 office of the Administration is given equal rep-
21 resentation in the Office over time; and

22 “(B) in which one of the career employees
23 described in subparagraph (A) shall serve as
24 Deputy Chief Scientist, who shall perform the
25 functions and duties of the Chief Scientist in

1 the event the latter is unable to carry out the
2 duties of the office, or in the event of a vacancy
3 in the office; and

4 “(5) not less frequently than once each year, in
5 coordination with the National Oceanic and Atmos-
6 pheric Administration Science Council, produce and
7 make publicly available a report that—

8 “(A) describes scientific accomplishments
9 of the Administration from the past year;

10 “(B) details progress towards goals and
11 challenges faced by the Administration’s re-
12 search and development portfolio, including
13 bibliometrics and other measures of scientific
14 merit, and progress towards improving diver-
15 sity, equity, and inclusion in the Administra-
16 tion’s scientific workforce;

17 “(C) provides a summary of Administra-
18 tion-funded research, including—

19 “(i) the percentage of Administration-
20 funded research that is funded
21 intramurally;

22 “(ii) the percentage of Administra-
23 tion-funded research that is funded
24 extramurally, including the relative propor-

tion of extramural research that is carried
out by each of the following:

“(I) the private sector;

“(II) Cooperative Institutes;

“(III) academia;

“(IV) non-governmental organizations; and

“(V) other categories as necessary; and

“(iii) a summary of Administration-funded research that is transitioned to operations, applications, commercialization, and utilization; and

“(D) provides reporting on scientific integrity actions, including by specifying the aggregate number of scientific and research misconduct cases, the number of consultations conducted, the number of allegations that were investigated, and the number of findings of misconduct.”.

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