

(B) Participation

For the purposes of this chapter, employees of Federal agencies may participate in the functions of the regional information coordination entities.

(d) System advisory committee**(1) In general**

The Administrator shall establish or designate a System advisory committee, which shall provide advice as may be requested by the Administrator or the Interagency Ocean Observing Committee.

(2) Purpose

The purpose of the System advisory committee is to advise the Administrator and the Interagency Ocean Observing Committee on—

(A) administration, operation, management, and maintenance of the System, including integration of Federal and non-Federal assets and data management and communication aspects of the System, and fulfillment of the purposes set forth in section 3601 of this title;

(B) expansion and periodic modernization and upgrade of technology components of the System;

(C) identification of end-user communities, their needs for information provided by the System, and the System's effectiveness in disseminating information to end-user communities and the general public; and

(D) any other purpose identified by the Administrator or the Interagency Ocean Observing Committee.

(3) Members**(A) In general**

The System advisory committee shall be composed of members appointed by the Administrator. Members shall be qualified by education, training, and experience to evaluate scientific and technical information related to the design, operation, maintenance, or use of the System, or use of data products provided through the System.

(B) Terms of service

Members shall be appointed for 3-year terms, renewable once. A vacancy appointment shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term of the vacancy, and an individual so appointed may subsequently be appointed for 2 full 3-year terms if the remainder of the unexpired term is less than 1 year.

(C) Chairperson

The Administrator shall designate a chairperson from among the members of the System advisory committee.

(D) Appointment

Members of the System advisory committee shall be appointed as special Government employees for purposes of section 202(a) of title 18.

(4) Administrative provisions**(A) Reporting**

The System advisory committee shall report to the Administrator and the Inter-

agency Ocean Observing Committee, as appropriate.

(B) Administrative support

The Administrator shall provide administrative support to the System advisory committee.

(C) Meetings

The System advisory committee shall meet at least once each year, and at other times at the call of the Administrator, the Interagency Ocean Observing Committee, or the chairperson.

(D) Compensation and expenses

Members of the System advisory committee shall not be compensated for service on that Committee, but may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5.

(E) Expiration

Section 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the System advisory committee.

(e) Civil liability

For purposes of determining liability arising from the dissemination and use of observation data gathered pursuant to this section, any non-Federal asset or regional information coordination entity incorporated into the System by contract, lease, grant, or cooperative agreement under subsection (c)(3)(D) that is participating in the System shall be considered to be part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Any employee of such a non-Federal asset or regional information coordination entity, while operating within the scope of his or her employment in carrying out the purposes of this chapter, with respect to tort liability, is deemed to be an employee of the Federal Government.

(f) Limitation

Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to invalidate existing certifications, contracts, or agreements between regional information coordination entities and other elements of the System.

(Pub. L. 111-11, title XII, § 12304, Mar. 30, 2009, 123 Stat. 1429.)

REFERENCES IN TEXT

Section 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act, referred to in subsec. (d)(4)(E), is section 14 of Pub. L. 92-463, which is set out in the Appendix to Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

§ 3604. Interagency financing and agreements**(a) In general**

To carry out interagency activities under this chapter, the Secretary of Commerce may execute cooperative agreements, or any other agreements, with, and receive and expend funds made available by, any State or subdivision thereof, any Federal agency, or any public or private organization, or individual.

(b) Reciprocity

Member Departments and agencies of the Council shall have the authority to create, sup-

port, and maintain joint centers, and to enter into and perform such contracts, leases, grants, and cooperative agreements as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter and fulfillment of the System Plan.

(Pub. L. 111–11, title XII, §12305, Mar. 30, 2009, 123 Stat. 1434.)

§ 3605. Application with other laws

Nothing in this chapter supersedes or limits the authority of any agency to carry out its responsibilities and missions under other laws.

(Pub. L. 111–11, title XII, §12306, Mar. 30, 2009, 123 Stat. 1435.)

§ 3606. Report to Congress

(a) Requirement

Not later than 2 years after March 30, 2009, and every 2 years thereafter, the Administrator shall prepare and the President acting through the Council shall approve and transmit to the Congress a report on progress made in implementing this chapter.

(b) Contents

The report shall include—

(1) a description of activities carried out under this chapter and the System Plan;

(2) an evaluation of the effectiveness of the System, including an evaluation of progress made by the Council to achieve the goals identified under the System Plan;

(3) identification of Federal and non-Federal assets as determined by the Council that have been integrated into the System, including assets essential to the gathering of required observation data variables necessary to meet the respective missions of Council agencies;

(4) a review of procurements, planned or initiated, by each Council agency to enhance, expand, or modernize the observation capabilities and data products provided by the System, including data management and communication subsystems;

(5) an assessment regarding activities to integrate Federal and non-Federal assets, nationally and on the regional level, and discussion of the performance and effectiveness of regional information coordination entities to coordinate regional observation operations;

(6) a description of benefits of the program to users of data products resulting from the System (including the general public, industries, scientists, resource managers, emergency responders, policy makers, and educators);

(7) recommendations concerning—

(A) modifications to the System; and

(B) funding levels for the System in subsequent fiscal years; and

(8) the results of a periodic external independent programmatic audit of the System.

(Pub. L. 111–11, title XII, §12307, Mar. 30, 2009, 123 Stat. 1435.)

§ 3607. Public-private use policy

The Council shall develop a policy within 6 months after March 30, 2009, that defines proc-

esses for making decisions about the roles of the Federal Government, the States, regional information coordination entities, the academic community, and the private sector in providing to end-user communities environmental information, products, technologies, and services related to the System. The Council shall publish the policy in the Federal Register for public comment for a period not less than 60 days. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require changes in policy in effect on March 30, 2009.

(Pub. L. 111–11, title XII, §12308, Mar. 30, 2009, 123 Stat. 1435.)

§ 3608. Independent cost estimate

Within 1 year after March 30, 2009, the Interagency Ocean Observation Committee, through the Administrator and the Director of the National Science Foundation, shall obtain an independent cost estimate for operations and maintenance of existing Federal assets of the System, and planned or anticipated acquisition, operation, and maintenance of new Federal assets for the System, including operation facilities, observation equipment, modeling and software, data management and communication, and other essential components. The independent cost estimate shall be transmitted unabridged and without revision by the Administrator to Congress.

(Pub. L. 111–11, title XII, §12309, Mar. 30, 2009, 123 Stat. 1436.)

§ 3609. Intent of Congress

It is the intent of Congress that funding provided to agencies of the Council to implement this chapter shall supplement, and not replace, existing sources of funding for other programs. It is the further intent of Congress that agencies of the Council shall not enter into contracts or agreements for the development or procurement of new Federal assets for the System that are estimated to be in excess of \$250,000,000 in life-cycle costs without first providing adequate notice to Congress and opportunity for review and comment.

(Pub. L. 111–11, title XII, §12310, Mar. 30, 2009, 123 Stat. 1436.)

§ 3610. Authorization of appropriations

There are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Commerce for fiscal years 2009 through 2013 such sums as are necessary to fulfill the purposes of this chapter and support activities identified in the annual coordinated System budget developed by the Interagency Ocean Observation Committee and submitted to the Congress.

(Pub. L. 111–11, title XII, §12311, Mar. 30, 2009, 123 Stat. 1436.)

§ 3611. Assessing and modeling named storms over coastal States

(a) Definitions

In this section: