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SUBCHAPTER I—EXPLORATION

**§ 3401. Purpose**

The purpose of this subchapter is to establish the national ocean exploration program and the national undersea research program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(Pub. L. 111-11, title XII, § 12001, Mar. 30, 2009, 123 Stat. 1417.)

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 111-11, title XII, § 12101, Mar. 30, 2009, 123 Stat. 1419, provided that: "This part [part II (§§ 12101-12107) of subtitle A of title XII of Pub. L. 111-11, enacting subchapter II of this chapter] may be cited as the 'NOAA Undersea Research Program Act of 2009'."

**§ 3402. Program established**

The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall, in consultation with the National Science Foundation and other appropriate Federal agencies, establish a coordinated national ocean exploration program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that promotes collaboration with other Federal ocean and undersea research and exploration programs. To the extent appropriate, the Administrator shall seek to facilitate coordination of data and information management systems, outreach and education programs to improve public understanding of ocean and coastal resources, and development and transfer of technologies to facilitate ocean and undersea research and exploration.

(Pub. L. 111-11, title XII, § 12002, Mar. 30, 2009, 123 Stat. 1417.)

**§ 3403. Powers and duties of the Administrator**

**(a) In general**

In carrying out the program authorized by section 3402 of this title, the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall—

- (1) conduct interdisciplinary voyages or other scientific activities in conjunction with other Federal agencies or academic or educational institutions, to explore and survey little known areas of the marine environment, inventory, observe, and assess living and non-living marine resources, and report such findings;

- (2) give priority attention to deep ocean regions, with a focus on deep water marine systems that hold potential for important scientific discoveries, such as hydrothermal vent communities and seamounts;

- (3) conduct scientific voyages to locate, define, and document historic shipwrecks, submerged sites, and other ocean exploration activities that combine archaeology and oceanographic sciences;

- (4) develop and implement, in consultation with the National Science Foundation, a transparent, competitive process for merit-based peer-review and approval of proposals for activities to be conducted under this program, taking into consideration advice of the Board established under section 3405 of this title;

- (5) enhance the technical capability of the United States marine science community by promoting the development of improved oceanographic research, communication, navigation, and data collection systems, as well as underwater platforms and sensor and autonomous vehicles; and

- (6) establish an ocean exploration forum to encourage partnerships and promote communication among experts and other stakeholders in order to enhance the scientific and technical expertise and relevance of the national program.

**(b) Donations**

The Administrator may accept donations of property, data, and equipment to be applied for the purpose of exploring the oceans or increasing knowledge of the oceans.

(Pub. L. 111-11, title XII, § 12003, Mar. 30, 2009, 123 Stat. 1417.)

**§ 3404. Ocean exploration and undersea research technology and infrastructure task force**

**(a) In general**

The Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in coordination with the National Science Foundation, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the United States Geological Survey, the Department of the Navy, the Mineral Management Service, and relevant governmental, non-governmental, academic, industry, and other experts, shall convene an ocean exploration and undersea research technology and infrastructure task force to develop and implement a strategy—

- (1) to facilitate transfer of new exploration and undersea research technology to the programs authorized under this subchapter and subchapter II of this chapter;

- (2) to improve availability of communications infrastructure, including satellite capabilities, to such programs;

- (3) to develop an integrated, workable, and comprehensive data management information processing system that will make information on unique and significant features obtained by such programs available for research and management purposes;

- (4) to conduct public outreach activities that improve the public understanding of ocean