

# 2026 Current Fiscal Year Report: Ocean Exploration Advisory Board

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**1. Department or Agency** Department of Commerce  
**2. Fiscal Year** 2026  
**3. Committee or Subcommittee** Ocean Exploration Advisory Board  
**3b. GSA Committee No.** 80491

**4. Is this New During Fiscal Year?** No  
**5. Current Charter** 07/26/2016  
**6. Expected Renewal Date** 07/26/2026  
**7. Expected Term Date**

**8a. Was Terminated During Fiscal Year?** No  
**8b. Specific Termination Authority**  
**8c. Actual Term Date**

**9. Agency Recommendation for Next Fiscal Year** Continue  
**10a. Legislation Req to Terminate?** Not Applicable  
**10b. Legislation Pending?** Not Applicable

**11. Establishment Authority** Statutory (Congress Created)

**12. Specific Establishment Authority** 33 U.S.C. 3401 et seq.  
**13. Effective Date** 03/30/2009  
**14. Committee Type** Continuing  
**14c. Presidential?** No

**15. Description of Committee** Scientific Technical Program Advisory Board

**16a. Total Number of Reports** No Reports for this Fiscal Year

**17a. Open** 0 **17b. Closed** 0 **17c. Partially Closed** 0 **Other Activities** 0 **17d. Total** 0

## Meetings and Dates

No Meetings

	Current FY	Next FY
<b>18a(1). Personnel Pmts to Non-Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00

<b>18a(2). Personnel Pmts to Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18a(3). Personnel Pmts to Federal Staff</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18a(4). Personnel Pmts to Non-Member Consultants</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18b(1). Travel and Per Diem to Non-Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18b(2). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Members</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18b(3). Travel and Per Diem to Federal Staff</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18b(4). Travel and Per Diem to Non-member Consultants</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18c. Administrative Costs (FRNs, contractor support, In-person/hybrid/virtual meetings)</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18d. Other (all other funds not captured by any other cost category)</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>18e. Total Costs</b>	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>19. Federal Staff Support Years (FTE)</b>	0.00	0.00

**20a. How does the Committee accomplish its purpose?**

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) Oceans Exploration Advisory Board (Board) continues: (1) to advise the Administrator on priority areas for survey, discovery, and opportunities for extramural collaboration and partnerships; (2) to assist the program in the development of a 5-year strategic plan for the fields of ocean, marine, and GreatLakes science, exploration, and discovery; (3) to annually review the quality and effectiveness of the proposal review process established under section 3403(a)(4); (4) to identify market barriers to

development or commercialization of novel ocean mapping, exploration, and characterization products, processes, and tools; (5) to identify best practices to improve data management, processing, storage, and archiving standards; and (6) to provide other assistance and advice as requested by the Administrator.

**20b. How does the Committee balance its membership?**

The Board currently consists of approximately 12 members including a Chair, designated by the Under Secretary in accordance with Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) requirements. Consideration is given to members that are experts in fields relevant to ocean exploration, including ocean scientists, engineers and technical experts, and experts in education and communications. Membership is open to individuals from academia, government, industry, non-governmental not-for-profit organizations, and other ocean-related institutions. Consideration is also given to members that have national and international reputations, or have degrees or professional qualifications in: physical, chemical, or biological oceanography, social sciences, or ocean engineering, technology, operations, education, and/or communications. Members have scientific credentials and/or relevant experience that enable them to provide expert advice concerning the Boards' roles within the context of NOAA's ocean missions and policies. OTHER BALANCE FACTORS: The categories of professional sector, geographic, gender and ethnic diversity are considered in the selection of Board members but are secondary to the scientific and technical expertise required.

**20c. How frequent and relevant are the**

## Committee Meetings?

The Board formally meets approximately twice per year. The meetings are required to assure that all members are fully informed and are provided the opportunity to contribute.

## 20d. Why can't the advice or information this committee provides be obtained elsewhere?

The Board is established by law. It reports to the NOAA Administrator as directed by 33 U.S.C. 3401 et seq.

## 20e. Why is it necessary to close and/or partially closed committee meetings?

N/A

## 21. Remarks

In FY25, the Board held two (2) meetings on October 9-10, 2024 and January 10, 2025.

## Designated Federal Officer

Liz Tirpak Senior Advisor

Committee Members	Start	End	Occupation	Member Designation
Ferrini, Vicki	09/30/2023	09/30/2026	Research Scientist Columbia University Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
laukea, Lesley	04/18/2023	04/17/2026	Professor University of Hawaii	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
King, Eric	09/30/2023	09/30/2026	Senior Director of Operations, Schmidt Ocean Institute	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Manley, Justin	09/30/2023	09/30/2026	Founder and President, Just Innovation Inc.	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

Millar, David	09/30/2023	09/30/2026	Government Accounts Director, Fugro USA, Inc.	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Smart, Clara	09/30/2023	09/30/2026	Ocean Engineer, Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member
Taum, Ramsay	09/30/2023	09/30/2026	Director, Pacific Islands Leadership Institute, Hawaii Pacific University	Special Government Employee (SGE) Member

**Number of Committee Members Listed: 7**

**Narrative Description**

The Board advises the Under Secretary on matters pertaining to ocean exploration including the identification of priority areas that warrant exploration; and the development and enhancement of technologies for exploring the oceans, managing the data and information, and disseminating the results. The Board also provides advice on the relevance of the program with regard to the NOAA Next Generation Strategic Plan and other guiding documents.

**What are the most significant program outcomes associated with this committee?**

Checked if  
Applies

- Improvements to health or safety
- Trust in government
- Major policy changes
- Advance in scientific research
- Effective grant making
- Improved service delivery
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Implementation of laws or regulatory requirements
- Other

**Outcome Comments**

N/A

**What are the cost savings associated with this committee?**

Checked if Applies

- None
- Unable to Determine
- Under \$100,000
- \$100,000 - \$500,000
- \$500,001 - \$1,000,000
- \$1,000,001 - \$5,000,000
- \$5,000,001 - \$10,000,000
- Over \$10,000,000
- Cost Savings Other

**Cost Savings Comments**

OEAB recommendations could result in efficiencies and cost savings to government, but these are not possible to quantify.

**What is the approximate Number of recommendations produced by this committee for the life of the committee?**

97

**Number of Recommendations Comments**

OEAB provided nine program review recommendations in FY25, bringing the total recommendations count to 97.

**What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Fully implemented by the agency?**

30%

**% of Recommendations Fully Implemented Comments**

See comment above. The OEAB provides complex analysis and recommendations, many of which must be implemented over time.

**What is the approximate Percentage of these recommendations that have been or will be Partially implemented by the agency?**

25%

**% of Recommendations Partially Implemented Comments**

See comment above. Recommendations partially implemented generally require time (more than one year) to implement.

**Does the agency provide the committee with feedback regarding actions taken to implement recommendations or advice offered?**

Yes  No  Not Applicable

**Agency Feedback Comments**

The agency provides feedback in response to formal letters from the OEAB chair, through senior agency participation in OEAB meetings, and through discussions between the OEAB chair and the OER director. All OEAB documents and meeting information are available at the OEAB website (oeab.noaa.gov)

**What other actions has the agency taken as a result of the committee's advice or recommendation?**

Checked if Applies

Reorganized Priorities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Reallocated resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Issued new regulation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Proposed legislation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Approved grants or other payments	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Action Comments**

NOAA Ocean Exploration has implemented many of the OEAB recommendations that fall within its span of control. This includes meaningful input the organization's 5-year strategic plan and exploration priorities - for example the current campaign in the mid-Pacific region - the Board also conducted a Program Review of NOAA Ocean Exploration

**Is the Committee engaged in the review of applications for grants?**

No

**Grant Review Comments**

OEAB is charged with an annual review of NOAA Ocean Exploration's grant making process, not for reviewing individual grant applications. The OEAB conducted the FY24 review on 09/17/2024.

**How is access provided to the information for the Committee's documentation?**

Checked if Applies

- Contact DFO
- Online Agency Web Site
- Online Committee Web Site
- Online GSA FACA Web Site
- Publications
- Other

**Access Comments**

All OEAB documents and meeting information are available at the OEAB website ([oeab.noaa.gov](http://oeab.noaa.gov))