

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON EXECUTIVE ORGANIZATION  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20506

January 16, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR

THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Oceanography and Atmospheric Programs Organization

The Council has considered the charge given to it by your letter to Roy Ash of May 19, 1969, to examine the recommendation of the Stratton Commission that an independent agency be established called the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). We have concluded that such an independent organization should not be established. The reasons are many.

1. A fundamental objection to NOAA is that it is organized around means rather than purposes or objectives. Certain kinds of research, mining, food production, weather prediction, pollution problems, and coastal management share the common medium of the sea. But the existence of this common characteristic does not call for an oceanographic agency as the most effective institution to deal with such problems. Each function has a different purpose related much more closely to programs with similar purposes than to the shared medium of the sea.
2. The NOAA proposal excludes military programs as well as economically important civilian marine activities such as: saline water conversion, off-shore oil drilling, and shipbuilding (including submarines). The reason that these activities were not included in NOAA's charter is that each is an essential part of a mission-oriented agency such as Navy or Interior.
3. NOAA's appeal as a research agency encounters similar difficulties. While pure research is essential to the progress of any society, research is more likely to be productive if it is related to specific purposes, many of which, like food production or national security, would

be outside of NOAA's mandate. The research thrust of NOAA might easily weaken linkages which exist between research in the ocean environment and the missions of agencies to which this research most directly relates. Indeed, if fundamental conflicts develop between NOAA and the mission-oriented agencies, as well they might, oceanography may have less rather than more support from Congress than it has today.

4. It makes little sense to establish yet another agency whose mandate overlaps those of other agencies and whose survival will depend on its ability to compete with the rest for money.
5. While the Stratton Commission correctly identified many ocean-related issues of increasing national importance, NOAA is not the best organization to meet those needs. The single criterion of relatedness to the sea is not a sufficient dimension around which to organize. Other criteria such as similarity of objectives or interchangeability of resources need to be taken into account.

As a concomitant to our consideration of the NOAA proposal we investigated alternatives to it. Among them were:

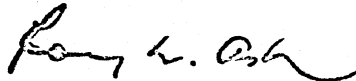
1. Create a small management agency of the type recommended by the Presidential Task Force on Oceanography headed by Mr. Wakelin.
2. Reaffirm current lead agency designations and assign lead agencies to program areas not yet covered.
3. Create a new cabinet level Department for the Environment and Natural Resources.
4. Reorganize and strengthen the Executive Office's activity in this area. Perhaps in addition, establish a new division within the National Science Foundation responsible for basic marine technology.
5. Reorganize Interior by adding Environmental Science Services Administration (ESSA) and consolidating all Interior marine and oceanographic programs under one Assistant Secretary for Marine and Atmospheric Affairs.

6. Reorganize Commerce by adding all the elements of the NOAA proposal (less the Coast Guard) and consolidating these under the supervision of the Assistant Secretary for Science and Technology.

We have concluded that, if a decision must be made now, the best alternative is that which would place many of the oceanographic and atmospheric programs in a restructured Department of the Interior. Our arguments for this position and additional recommendations on this area are given in the attached Council memorandum. While we believe these recommendations are sound, they concern an area of federal activity intimately related to the broader arena of environmental and natural resource programs, as your letter of May 19 points out.

Organization for environmental control and natural resource development is currently under Council consideration. Our recommendations on this subject are due to you in mid-April. Because the action taken on the oceanography proposal is so closely related to action which may be taken on environmental and natural resource programs, we recommend strongly that a decision on our oceanographic and atmospheric recommendations be delayed until the position you wish to take on natural resource and environmental control organization is clarified.

If you are unable, for whatever reason, to delay action on an oceanographic proposal, we believe that the recommendations made in the attached memorandum should be implemented.



Roy L. Ash  
Chairman  
President's Advisory Council  
on Executive Organization

Attachment