The Office of Marine & Aviation Operations (OMAO) requests $220.9M in FY 2011, reflecting a net increase of $17.8M over the FY 2010 Enacted. This budget request supports construction, maintenance, and improvements to NOAA’s Fleet and Diving Program in order to enhance the Department of Commerce’s environmental and scientific goals.

**NOAA Dive Center Improvement Plan +$0.8M:** NOAA divers perform over 15,000 dives annually in support of NOAA’s programs. These funds will support the findings released in the NOAA Florida Keys National Sanctuary Dive Fatality Incident Report to increase safety and reduce the number of dive-related incidents. These recommendations include development of diving standards and safety guidelines compliant with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, advancement of training programs, and issuance of additional safety equipment.

**Preventive, Corrective, and Deferred Ship Maintenance +$6.2M:** This request addresses the backlog of deferred maintenance items in the NOAA fleet and augments preventative maintenance rates. After five years the preventative maintenance backlog will be eliminated for equipment and improvements that enhance crew safety and productivity.

**Fleet Capital Improvements and Technology Infusion – Miller Freeman Major Repair Period +$7.4M:** This requested increase will accelerate a planned FY 2013 Major Repair Period to address structural, mechanical, and electrical breakdowns of the Miller Freeman. The ship’s condition jeopardizes safe operations, compliance with ship certification requirements, and days at sea. The Miller Freeman’s capabilities are essential for advancing NOAA science in the North Pacific, meeting requirements of the Magnuson-Stevens Reauthorization Act, and stock assessments of critical fisheries.

**New Vessel Construction (FSV5) +$3.0M:** A new shallow-draft fisheries survey vessel (FSV5) will be designed for research in the Gulf of Mexico, including marine resource, habitat, and integrated ecosystem surveys. It will replace the deeper-draft Oregon II, which is an aging ship with many engineering problems. Data from these cruises will be critical to assessments of the snapper-grouper complex, billfish, tunas, swordfish and sharks, and status of protected species, habitat, and ecosystem health.

**New Vessel Construction (FSV6) +$1.4M:** These funds enable the continued construction of fisheries survey vessel (FSV6) planned for the West Coast to replace the David Starr Jordan, which requires extensive work to be seaworthy and faces early retirement in 2010. Initial construction funding for FSV6 was provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, 2009. FSV6 is needed to perform acoustic surveys with complementary capabilities for direct sampling of fish and zooplankton, and boat recovery in open seas.