H. R. 3952

To strengthen the role of the Chief Scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in order to promote scientific integrity and advance the Administration’s world-class research and development portfolio.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 16, 2021

Ms. S HERRILL (for herself and Mr. F EENSTRA) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, and in addition to the Committee on Natural Resources, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To strengthen the role of the Chief Scientist of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in order to promote scientific integrity and advance the Administration’s world-class research and development portfolio.

1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
4 This Act may be cited as the “NOAA Chief Scientist
5 Act”.

SEC. 2. AMENDMENT TO THE REORGANIZATION PLAN NO. 4 OF 1970.

Section 2(d) of Reorganization Plan No. 4 of 1970 (5 U.S.C. App) is amended—

(1) by inserting after the first sentence the following: “The President shall, in appointing the Chief Scientist, give due consideration to any recommendations for appointments which may be submitted by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Science Advisory Board, or by other widely-recognized and reputable scientific or educational organizations.”;

(2) after “principal scientific advisor to the Administrator”, by inserting “on cross-cutting science and technology policy and strategy”;

(3) after “to the work of the Administration”, by inserting “, and who has produced work of scientific merit through an established record of distinguished service and achievement highly respected by the scientific community”; and

(4) by adding at the end the following: “The Chief Scientist shall—

“(1)(A) provide written consent to all applicable scientific integrity policies of the Administration prior to appointment, with such written consent to
be made available on a publicly accessible website of
the Administration;

“(B) in conjunction with the Administrator and
other members of Administration leadership, under-
go all applicable training programs of the Adminis-
tration which inform employees of their rights and
responsibilities regarding the conduct of scientific re-
search and communication with the media and the
public regarding scientific research; and

“(C) in coordination with the Administrator
and other members of Administration leadership,
make all practicable efforts to ensure that Adminis-
tration employees and contractors who are engaged
in, supervise, or manage scientific activities, analyze
or communicate information resulting from scientific
activities, or use scientific information in policy,
management, or regulatory decisions, adhere to es-
established scientific integrity policies of the Adminis-
tration;

“(2) provide policy and program direction for
science and technology priorities at the Administra-
tion and facilitate integration and coordination of re-
search efforts across line offices of the Administra-
tion, with other Federal agencies, and with the ex-
ternal scientific community, including through—
“(A) leading the development of science strategy at the Administration and issuing policy guidance to ensure that overarching Administration policy is aligned with science goals and objectives;

“(B) chairing the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Science Council and serving as principal liaison to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Science Advisory Board;

“(C) providing oversight to ensure that the Administration funds only the highest-priority, most exemplary, meritorious, and mission-driven science, including through partnerships with the private sector, Cooperative Institutes, academia, non-governmental organizations, and other Federal and non-Federal institutions, and that there is no duplication of research efforts;

“(D) ensuring the Administration attracts, retains, and promotes world class scientists and researchers;

“(E) promoting the health and professional development of the Administration’s scientific workforce; and
“(F) advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Administration’s scientific workforce and its conduct and application of science;

“(3) under the direction of the Administrator, promote, communicate, and advocate for the Administration’s science portfolio and strategy to the broad external and international community and Congress, represent the Administration in promoting and maintaining good public and community relations, and provide the widest practical and appropriate dissemination of information concerning the climate, weather, oceans, fisheries, and coasts;

“(4) manage an Office of the Chief Scientist—

“(A) which shall be staffed by rotating career employees of the Administration, serving terms not greater than four years, in a manner that promotes diversity, equity, inclusion, leadership, and professional development, such that, to the maximum extent practicable, each line office of the Administration is given equal representation in the Office over time; and

“(B) in which one of the career employees described in subparagraph (A) shall serve as Deputy Chief Scientist, who shall perform the functions and duties of the Chief Scientist in
the event the latter is unable to carry out the

duties of the office, or in the event of a vacancy

in the office; and

“(5) not less frequently than once each year, in

coordination with the National Oceanic and Atmos-

pheric Administration Science Council, produce and

make publicly available a report that—

“(A) describes scientific accomplishments

of the Administration from the past year;

“(B) details progress towards goals and

challenges faced by the Administration’s re-

search and development portfolio, including

bibliometrics and other measures of scientific

merit, and progress towards improving diver-

sity, equity, and inclusion in the Administra-

tion’s scientific workforce;

“(C) provides a summary of Administra-

tion-funded research, including—

“(i) the percentage of Administration-

funded research that is funded

intramurally;

“(ii) the percentage of Administra-

tion-funded research that is funded

extramurally, including the relative propor-
tion of extramural research that is carried
out by each of the following:

“(I) the private sector;

“(II) Cooperative Institutes;

“(III) academia;

“(IV) non-governmental organi-
izations; and

“(V) other categories as nec-
essary; and

“(iii) a summary of Administration-
funded research that is transitioned to op-
erations, applications, commercialization,
and utilization; and

“(D) provides reporting on scientific integ-
rity actions, including by specifying the aggre-
gate number of scientific and research mis-
conduct cases, the number of consultations con-
ducted, the number of allegations that were in-
vestigated, and the number of findings of mis-
conduct.”.