# POSITION DESCRIPTION

# UnderSecretary for Oceans and Atmosphere and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Administrator, Department of commerce

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| **OVERVIEW** |
| Senate Committee | Commerce, Science and Transportation |
| Agency Mission | The mission of the department is to create the conditions for economic growth and opportunity. |
| Position Overview | The undersecretary for oceans and atmosphere, and administrator of the Department of Commerce’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)—which has a presence in every state and territory—provides leadership for the science-based federal agency on its regulatory, operational and information-service responsibilities. With its mission of science, service and stewardship, NOAA advances understanding and prediction of, and data and research regarding, the ocean, coasts, Great Lakes, weather, atmosphere and related ecosystems, for use by the nation’s businesses and people.[[1]](#endnote-1) |
| Compensation | Level III $165,300 (5 U.S.C. § 5314)[[2]](#endnote-2) |
| Position Reports to | Secretary and Deputy Secretary[[3]](#endnote-3) |
| **RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| Management Scope | In 2016, NOAA had 11,100 nonseasonal, full-time, permanent employees. NOAA proposed a fiscal 2017 budget of $5.85 billion.[[4]](#endnote-4) |
| Primary Responsibilities | * Oversees the National Ocean Service, which delivers science-based tools and services to understand, make predictions about and protect America’s coasts, Great Lakes and ocean waters, and to sustain healthy and resilient economies, communities and ecosystems
* Oversees the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations, which manages, operates and maintains the nation’s largest civil fleet of research and survey ships, and aircraft, as well as the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps, the seventh uniformed service of the United States
* Oversees the National Marine Fisheries Service, to protect and preserve the United States’ living marine resources and habitats in the world’s largest exclusive economic zone, through scientific research, fisheries management, law enforcement and habitat conservation
* Oversees the National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service, which observes the Earth, sun, oceans and atmosphere with the geostationary operational environmental satellites for short-range warning and forecasting and polar-orbiting operational environmental satellites for longer-term forecasting
* Oversees the National Weather Service, which provides weather, water and climate forecasts, and warnings for the United States, its territories, adjacent waters and ocean areas
* Oversees the Office of Oceanic Atmospheric Research, which strengthens the science that is the foundation of all NOAA products and services, and hosts a network of research laboratories, grant programs and cooperative institutes with academia
* Works closely with the Council on Environmental Quality, the Coast Guard, the Navy, the Army Corps of Engineers, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, the Department of the Interior, the Department of State, the Environmental Protection Agency and the Office of Science and Technology[[5]](#endnote-5)
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| Strategic Goals and Priorities | [Depends on the policy priorities of the administration] |
| **REQUIREMENTS AND COMPETENCIES** |
| Requirements | * Extensive management experience
* Strong scientific background in either oceans or climate[[6]](#endnote-6)
* Ability to work with relevant stakeholders, including the Council on Environmental Quality, the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of State
* Ability to serve as the face of the agency, domestically and internationally
* Experience in NOAA or government (preferred)
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| Competencies | * Excellent leadership skills, with ability to lead a large organization and have the staff follow
* Political acumen
* Team player
* Ability to work with other environmental and energy leaders across the federal government to accomplish administration goals[[7]](#endnote-7)
* Ability to work across partisan lines
* Strong communication and interpersonal skills
* Ability to work with multiple agencies
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| **PAST APPOINTEES** |
| Kathryn D. Sullivan (2014 to 2017): Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction and Deputy Administrator of the NOAA; President and CEO, Center of Science & Industry; Chief Scientist, NOAA[[8]](#endnote-8) |
| Jane Lubchenco (2009 to 2013): Wayne and Gladys Valley Professor, Marine Biology, Oregon State University; President, International Council for Science; President, The Ecological Society of America[[9]](#endnote-9) |
| Conrad Lautenbacher, Jr. (2001 to 2008): Chief Executive Officer, The Consortium for Oceanographic Research and Education; Associate, Technology, Strategies and Alliances Inc.; Deputy Chief of Naval Operations, U.S. Navy, Department of the Navy[[10]](#endnote-10) |

1. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2017 (Public Law 115-31, May 5, 2017), contains a provision that continues the freeze on the payable pay rates for certain senior political officials at 2013 levels during calendar year 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. Partnership for Public Service analysis of Fedscope data

http://www.corporateservices.noaa.gov/nbo/fy17\_bluebook/NOAA\_FY17\_CJ\_508.pdf [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Romney Readiness Project position description [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. https://www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/sullivan-kd.html [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Leadership Directories [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Leadership Directories [↑](#endnote-ref-10)