



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of Legislative Affairs

Office of the Assistant Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

December 22, 2020

The Honorable Russell Vought
Director
Office of Management and Budget
Washington, DC 20503

Dear Mr. Director:

This letter responds to your request for the views and recommendations of the Department of Justice (the Department) on Enrolled Bill S. 914, the “Coordinated Ocean Observations and Research Act of 2020.” The Department takes no position on whether the President should sign this bill. If he does, we recommend the following signing statement language:

Today, I have signed into law S. 914, the “Coordinated Ocean Observations and Research Act of 2020.” Section 103(b) of the Act amends section 12304(c) of the Integrated Coastal and Ocean Observation System Act to provide that the Interagency Ocean Observation Committee shall develop and transmit to Congress along with the President’s annual budget a “coordinated, comprehensive budget” addressing certain elements of the system provided for by that earlier statute. This requirement to recommend legislative measures contravenes the Recommendations Clause, U.S. Const. art. II, § 3, which gives the President the constitutional prerogative to recommend to Congress only such measures as the President shall judge necessary and expedient. My Administration will implement this provision in a manner consistent with the Recommendations Clause.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our views. Please do not hesitate to contact this office if we may be of additional assistance to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mary Blanche Hankey".

Mary Blanche Hankey
Acting Assistant Attorney General