SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO 90-2 FORM.

1. The current form has a field for "Data Sharing Plan", a required element of all NOAA research proposals starting in 2013. To provide users (especially users who used software to fill out the form) some time to adjust to this new field, it was made optional, and Data Sharing Plan information was also accepted as part of the "Methodology" field (a long-standing part of the form). The current form says that this information can be included in either place. We are proposing to remove this option, so that information on the Data Sharing Plan now must be put in the Data Sharing Plan field.

This change is not expected to make any change in the reporting burden.

2. The current form has a field called initiation date and one called completion date. Because of space limitations, these are shown on the form as "Init. Date" and "Comp. Date". Users found this confusing. The names of these fields are to be changed to "Start Date" and "End Date".

This wording change is not expected to make any change in the reporting burden.

3. To accommodate two different ways users of the form compile project information, users are allowed to fill out the "Objectives", "Methodology", and "Rationale" fields to describe their project, or alternatively to provide all project information in a single "Abstract" narrative that can be put in the "Objectives" field. At the request of a user, a brief instruction about this is placed on the form itself.

This wording change is not expected to make any change in the reporting burden.

4. The current form has a number of fields that submitters sometimes use for their own purposes, such as providing a convenient place to store information they need, or a way to get information they need from participants in a project proposal. These are not tracked or used by NOAA, and only remain on the field as a convenience to the users. The form says, "National Office does not track these fields:".

Three of the fields contain information that NOAA sometimes collects from project applicants by other means, and some users have commented that it would be more convenient and less confusing if the information were conveyed and tracked by NOAA through this form. The three fields are Start Date and End Date (two fields described in paragraph 2 above), and a field called "Multiprogram?", where a "Yes" answer indicates that more than one Sea Grant program is collaborating on a project. We propose to start tracking these three fields. This change is expected to result in a minimal increase in reporting burden, in the time it takes to fill out the Start and End date of a project, just a few seconds per form. Almost all projects (>95%) are not multiprogram projects, but for those that are, noting this on the form is expected to take only a few seconds. This small burden is expected to be more than offset by the time saved by Programs when they are using these forms for their own project tracking purposes, because they won't have to search out this information elsewhere.

4. Sea Grant Programs fund and execute a number of individual projects every year. They are expected to select a minimum percentage of these projects by a competitive process, and NOAA tracks this percentage for each Sea Grant Program. Almost all Research projects are required to be selected by competition, and historically almost all other projects (for example, Administration, Extension or Communication projects) are not selected competitively, so knowing the fraction of projects that were research provided an adequate surrogate for the fraction of projects selected by competition. There has been a recent trend among some Programs to select some non-Research projects by competition, so

this surrogate is becoming less accurate. A checkbox is proposed to be added to the form to indicate when a project was selected competitively. It will default to be checked for research projects and unchecked for other projects, so that action to change the checkbox will only be needed in the relatively infrequent situations where a research project was not selected competitively, or a non-research project was selected competitively.

Because the competitive checkbox will be correctly defaulted for almost all projects, the burden to check or uncheck it for those few exceptions will be negligible.

5. The current 90-2 form has a field for PI (Principle Investigator), second PI, third PI and fourth PI. In our project database, the first name is recorded as the PI of the project, and the others are recorded as co-PIs. The wording of the form is proposed to be changed to label these fields "PI", "co-PI", "co-PI", "co-PI".

This wording change is not expected to make any change in the reporting burden.

6. Many Sea Grant Projects last for more than one year. In these cases, the amount of funding devoted each year to the project is recorded elsewhere, for example in the grant application. Some users have suggested that this 90-2 form would be more useful if it included not just fields for the Federal and Match dollar amounts for the entire project, but also a year-by-year breakdown of Federal and Match funds.

We have made no change in the proposed 90-2 form being submitted today, but we are working on finding a way to implement this change that will not cause confusion on the form, and will reduce, or at least not increase, the burden of also reporting these yearly amounts elsewhere. If we can find a way to effect this change with no net increase of burden on the user, we would like to incorporate that change into the 90-2 form in the future.

This change, if it is effected, will not result in any increase in reporting burden for the programs.

SUMMARY: The overall increase in burden from all of the above changes is expected to be zero for 90% of users of the form, and just a few seconds for the remaining users. This amounts to a total estimated additional burden for users of less than one total hour per year:

 (10% of 90-2 forms users ≈ 68) X (15 extra seconds per form) ≈ 17 additional minutes.

This entire increase in reporting burden is expected to be more than offset by time and effort savings for users in reduced errors and need for correction, and in increased usefulness of the form for the users own information purposes.