

# SECOORA BOARD OF DIRECTORS | 2026 ELECTION PROCEDURAL FRAMEWORK

*Nominations are due April 10, 2026 by 5 PM ET*

## A. FINAL ARBITER OF THE SECOORA BOARD OF DIRECTORS ELECTION PROCESS

1. According to SECOORA By-Laws as revised and approved at the May 13, 2009 Members meeting, the SECOORA Board Development Committee has the following charges:
  - Establish criteria and processes for Board elections, accept nominations, screen prospective nominees, and provide a slate of candidates to the members for approval.
    - a. Develop the annual Board ballot and coordinate circulation to the membership, allowing ample time for consideration of all candidates and resolution of any technical problems.
    - b. Establish procedures for determining winners of Board elections and handling any disputed election results.
    - c. Establish procedures governing candidates' conduct regarding election campaigns.
2. The **2026 SECOORA Board of Directors Election Procedural Framework** has been drafted by the Board Development Committee, based on the 2025 Framework, which was based on earlier Frameworks that were vetted, commented upon, and supported by the Executive Committee (EXCOM).
3. A subset of the Board Development Committee will serve as an impartial Nomination Sub-Committee (NSC). Those on the NSC will be Board Development Committee members who are not running for re-election in the current term.
4. The NSC will act as the final arbiter of the 2026 Board of Directors Elections.

## B. NOMINATION PROCESS AND THE OFFICIAL SECOORA BOARD ELECTION BALLOT FOR 2026

1. SECOORA By-Laws are the basis for the development of the 2026 Board Election process.
2. An oral vote will be taken at the 2026 SECOORA Membership Annual Meeting, May 20, 2026, if the ballot is uncontested. If the ballot is contested, then the full membership will vote virtually using a secure online voting system (Election Buddy). The winners of the election will be announced during the 2026 SECOORA Membership Annual Meeting on May 20, 2026.
3. The 2026 Board Election shall fill those positions on the Board of Directors that will become open on July 1, 2026, due to the staggered terms of SECOORA Board members. The following seats are open for nomination. The attached Appendix shows a list of current Board members whose terms are expiring highlighted in yellow. The Appendix also shows those Members eligible for each seat and a list of Members in Good

Standing.

***At Large – FL***

ONE POSITION AVAILABLE

***Academic/ Research/ Education***

ONE POSITION AVAILABLE

***Industry/Private Sector***

ONE POSITION AVAILABLE

4. Criteria and Deadlines for nominees wishing to fill the Board position(s) are due by **5 PM ET on April 10, 2026** to the Nominations Sub-Committee via Abbey Wakely ([abbey@secoora.org](mailto:abbey@secoora.org)) and copy the NSC at [nominations@secoora.org](mailto:nominations@secoora.org).

Nominees must:

- a. Represent SECOORA's broad constituency
- b. Be a SECOORA Member in Good Standing (dues paid)

Each nomination must include:

- c. Written confirmation that the individual agrees to serve if elected
- d. A two-page CV outlining relevant background and experience related to ocean observing systems and the ability to represent SECOORA
- e. A signed Conflict of Interest (COI) [statement](#)

5. SECOORA members may nominate themselves or be nominated by other SECOORA members as candidates. A nominee may be a candidate in only one category of Board Seat.
6. The NSC will review nominations of candidates on behalf of the Board Development Committee.
7. The NSC will review each nominee's COI disclosure and determine to its satisfaction whether or not a COI exists. If a COI is viewed to exist, the NSC will develop a draft remedy. The NSC will explain the situation to the SECOORA Executive Committee and seek approval of the draft remedy. Once approval is given, the NSC will ask for agreement from the nominee to follow the remedy to be nominated.
8. All nominees meeting the announced criteria will be submitted as a Slate of Candidates to the Board of Directors for approval.
9. The approved Slate of Candidates, their CVs, their COI disclosure, and if applicable, the

remedy, will be posted on the SECOORA website with a notice emailed to all SECOORA members.

10. No nominations to this Slate will be accepted from the floor during the annual meeting.
11. If there is a contested ballot, voting will take place using Election Buddy. Institutional Member representatives may vote for all candidates. Individual Members may only vote for At Large candidates.

### C. PROCEDURES GOVERNING CANDIDATES' and MEMBERS' CONDUCT REGARDING ELECTION CAMPAIGNS

1. Once nominated to be a candidate for a Board seat, the person nominated may seek support for a position on the Board through verbal, electronic, or written communication. Campaigning for a SECOORA Board seat by a candidate or a member shall not occur in the form of negative criticism of any other person nominated for a Board Seat that is the subject of a 2026 Board Election.
2. Once nominated to be a candidate for a Board seat, nothing of tangible or intangible value may be exchanged between such candidate and any SECOORA member or member representative. No member of SECOORA shall engage in inappropriate or unethical activities associated with an election.
3. Should an incident be reported to the NSC that, if true, constitutes prohibited campaign activity, the NSC will investigate and resolve the matter. If unable to reach a resolution, the NSC will refer the matter to the full Board of Directors for resolution.

### D. TIMELINE OF EVENTS FOR BOARD NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION PROCESS

1. **March 12, 2026 Notice.** A notice shall be emailed by the SECOORA Staff to all SECOORA members and posted on the SECOORA website with the following information:
  - a. SECOORA Board of Directors Election Procedural Framework
  - b. Criteria for Board Nominations as provided in B.4 above with information on openings in the various Board categories (i.e., Institutional Member Seat in the Industry/Private Sector (one), etc.).
  - c. Request all SECOORA members wishing to make nominations to send the nominations by COB on April 10, 2026 to the NSC (see page Section B. 4c).
  - d. Reminder Notice: SECOORA members wishing to designate a proxy to vote on their behalf at the 2026 SECOORA Membership Meeting must notify the SECOORA Executive Director, Debra Hernandez (debra@secoora.org).
2. **April 10, 2026 at 5pm** is the Nomination Deadline.

3. To be determined: The NSC shall review nominations and CVs to assure the timeliness of the nomination and alignment with criteria for nominees. The NSC shall construct and approve the draft Slate of Candidates. With the approval of the Board Development Committee, the Slate of Candidates shall be submitted on or before, April 17, 2026, to the SECOORA Board for approval.
4. April 17, 2026 The SECOORA Board sends their approval of the draft or revised Slate of Candidates back to the NSC. The nomination period is closed.
5. To be determined, likely April 17, 2026, the approved Slate of Candidates is posted with their CVs on the SECOORA website.
6. To be determined, likely April 17, 2026 the NSC directs the SECOORA staff to construct the Official 2026 SECOORA Board Election Ballot and approves the final version thereof.
7. April 17, 2026 The SECOORA staff will post the Official 2026 SECOORA Election Ballot, the list of dues paying members in good standing, and the list of members' representatives (or approved proxy as of that date) voting in the 2026 Board election. The NSC shall confer on this date to review the items posted to confirm with SECOORA staff that the lists and other items posted for the 2026 Board Election are accurate.
8. Week of April 21, 2026: If the ballot is contested, SECOORA staff will prepare an electronic ballot using Election Buddy. An email to each Member Representative will be sent that contains a code to vote. The nature of the electronic vote eliminates the need for a proxy, but one is allowed to be designated to the Executive Director if it is requested.
9. Week of May 11, 2026 any runoff elections for tie ballots will be held using Election Buddy. Results of Board members winning their respective elections will be announced at the SECOORA Annual Meeting.

## **E. ELECTION PROCESS**

1. Contested ballot voting procedures are listed above.
2. Uncontested ballot voting procedures are listed above.

## **F. COUNTING OF VOTES AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF RESULTS**

1. SECOORA staff members will double check the Election Buddy votes, and the results will be saved in the SECOORA records.
2. If there are no tie votes or issues with the 67% rule (see Section H), the election results shall be announced by the Chair of the NSC to the Annual Meeting attendees.

## G. ELECTION PROCESS IN CASE OF A TIE VOTE FOR A SPECIFIC BOARD SEAT.

1. Tie votes will be handled by a run-off election in the week of May 11, 2026, via Election Buddy. SECOORA staff members will double check the Election Buddy votes, and the results will be saved in the SECOORA records.

## H. ELECTION PROCESS TO SEEK A MORE DISPERSED GEOGRAPHIC COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

SECOORA By-Laws, Article IV – BOARD OF DIRECTORS; Section 1 states: “Composition of the Board. The Board will be composed of 11 members. The number of Board seats filled should always be an odd number. No state will hold more than sixty-seven (67%) percent of seats on the Board”.

1. It is possible in any given election year to have an election that, when the individuals who have won their respective Board Seats are installed as Board members in June or so of each year, results in Board composition that will violate this By-Law section (more than 67% of the Board come from one state).
2. After the ballots are counted and results are reported to the SECOORA Membership by the NSC, if any state has more than (67%) of Board membership, then the NSC will follow this procedure:
  - a. The NSC will first ask if any of the newly elected Board members from that state with more than 67% Board Seats wish to relinquish so that the number of seats from one state can conform to the By-Law requirement in Article IV, Section 1. Should such a Board member announce that he or she wishes to relinquish; the NSC will draw up and approve the Slate of Candidates to fill the seat vacated and, with SECOORA staff, present another ballot to the SECOORA Members for election to the newly opened Board Seat.
  - b. If no Board member from such a state wishes to resign, the matter will be turned over to the Board of Directors for resolution no later than June 15<sup>th</sup> and sent to the Governance Committee (options include an election of one or more new Board members, acceptance of resignations from one or more existing Board members, or appointment of members to Public Seats by the Board of Directors).

## I. CLOSING COMMENTS AND PROCEDURES

1. All 2026 Board Election ballots through Election Buddy shall be kept as SECOORA records on the 2026 Board Election and shall be reviewed prior to storage by the Secretary of the SECOORA Board of Directors.
2. After the announcement of the results of the 2026 Board Election, the Chair of the NSC will confirm the 2026 Election is concluded and that the newly elected Board of Directors will be installed as Board members on July 1, 2026.

## APPENDIX

**The SECOORA Board voted in January 2019 that PIs are no longer eligible to serve on the SECOORA Board. The SECOORA membership voted to change the bylaws in May 2023 to make the size of the Board 13 as follows:**

Public Seat: 3

Industry/Private Sectors: 2

Academic/Education Research Sectors: 2

Public Agencies/Non-Profit/Other Sectors: 2

At Large Member Seats:

1 North Carolina

1 South Carolina

1 Georgia

1 Florida

**Current List of Board Members**

The SECOORA Board seats and term limits are given below. Yellow highlighted are the ONLY SEATS BEING FILLED in the 2026 Election.

Industry/Private Sector	Term Limit (yr)
Vacant	
Patrick Barrineau	3 (as of 7/1/2024)

Academic/Research/Education Sector	Term Limit (yr)
Bryan Franks	3 (as of 7/1/2025)
Gary Mitchum	3 (as of 7/1/2023) TERM IS UP – not eligible to rerun for seat

Public Agencies/Non-Profit/Other Sector	Term Limit (yr)
Evelien VanderKloet	3 (as of 7/1/2024)
Duane DeFreese	3 (as of 7/1/2025)

At-Large	Term Limit (yr)
Aslan Asli (GA)	3 (as of 7/1/2025)
Nathan Hall (NC)	3 (as of 7/1/2024)
Erin Hague (FL)	3 (as of 7/1/2023) TERM IS UP – eligible to rerun for seat
Scott Harris (SC)	3 (as of 7/1/2024)

Public Seat	Term Limit (yr)
Jeff Copeland	3 (as of 7/1/2025)

**Current List of Eligible Members**

<b><u>Industry/Private Sector - ONE POSITION</u></b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
Upton Environmental Inc. D/B/A ROFFS	Matt Upton
WeatherFlowTempest	Benjamin Miller
RCOAST	Christy Swann
Surflin/Wavetrak Inc	Paul Ganev

<b><u>Academic/Research/Education Sector - ONE POSITION</u></b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
FIU-SEAS	Jim Fourqurean
Harbor Branch Oceanographic	Jim Sullivan
Skidaway Institute of Oceanography	Adam Greer
University of South Florida	Tom Frazer
NC State University	Ruoying He
Clemson University Water Resource Center	Christopher Post

<b><u>At-Large - FL - ONE POSITION</u></b>	
<b>Organization</b>	<b>Representative</b>
FIU-SEAS	Jim Fourqurean
Florida Institute of Oceanography	Mike Kahle
Harbor Branch Oceanographic	Jim Sullivan
Mote Marine Laboratory	Michael Crosby
Upton Environmental Inc. D/B/A ROFFS	Matt Upton
University of South Florida	Tom Frazer
Tetra Tech	Erin Hague

**Active Members**

Sustaining Members					
Organization	Representative	State	Sector	Date Received	Board of Directors
Mote Marine Laboratory	Michael Crosby	FL	Public Agencies/Non-Profit/Other	8/28/25	
University of South Florida	Tom Frazer	FL	Academic/Research/Education	5/20/25	
Insitutional					
Organization	Representative	State	Sector	Date Received	Board of Directors
OTN NETWORK AT DALHOUSIE	Evelien VanderKloet	Canada	Public Agencies/Non-Profit/Other	10/3/25	Y (7/1/2024)
FIU-SEAS	Jim Fourqurean	FL	Academic/Research/Education	4/22/25	
FL Fish and Wildlife Research Institute	Luke McEachron	FL	Public Agencies/Non-Profit/Other	7/23/25	
Florida Institute of Oceanography	Mike Kahle	FL	Public Agencies/Non-Profit/Other	10/8/25	
Florida Institute of Technology	Steven Lazarus	FL	Academic/Research/Education	6/1/25	
Harbor Branch Oceanographic	Jim Sullivan	FL	Academic/Research/Education	12/2/25	
Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program	Duane De Freese	FL	Public Agencies/Non-Profit/Other	5/12/25	Y (7/1/2025)
Jacksonville University Marine Science Research Institute	Bryan Franks	FL	Academic/Research/Education	9/17/25	Y (7/1/2025)
University of Miami-Rosenstiel School	Nick Shay	FL	Academic/Research/Education	9/30/25	
Upton Environmental Inc. D/B/A ROFFS	Matt Upton	FL	Industry/Private	5/27/25	
Georgia Southern University	Asli Aslan	GA	Academic/Research/Education	8/1/25	Y (7/1/2025)
Skidaway Institute of Oceanography	Adam Greer	GA	Academic/Research/Education	7/8/25	
ECU (Coastal Studies Institute)	Mike Muglia	NC	Academic/Research/Education	7/30/25	
Fathom Science	Jennifer Warillow	NC	Industry/Private	9/17/25	
NC Coastal Federation	Braxton Davis	NC	Public Agencies/Non-Profit/Other	1/26/26	
NC State University	Ruoying He	NC	Academic/Research/Education	10/13/25	
UNC Wilmington	Lynn Leonard	NC	Academic/Research/Education	9/25/25	
UNC-Chapel Hill	Nathan Hall	NC	Academic/Research/Education	6/17/25	Y (7/1/2024)
Clemson University Water Resource Center	Christopher Post	SC	Academic/Research/Education	6/26/25	
Coastal Carolina University	Paul Gayes	SC	Academic/Research/Education	9/17/25	
Coastal Science & Engineering, Inc.	Patrick Barrineau	SC	Industry/Private	4/23/25	Y (7/1/2024)
College of Charleston	Scott Harris	SC	Academic/Research/Education	6/19/25	Y (7/1/2024)
Port Royal Sound Foundation	Jody Hayward	SC	Public Agencies/Non-Profit/Other	1/13/26	
SC Beach Advocates	Nicole Elko	SC	Public Agencies/Non-Profit/Other	1/7/26	
SC DNR Marine Resources Division	Tracey Smart	SC	Public Agencies/Non-Profit/Other	10/1/25	
SC Sea Grant Consortium	Susan Lovelace	SC	Public Agencies/Non-Profit/Other	7/14/25	
Surflife/Wavetrak Inc	Paul Ganev	CA	Industry/Private Sector	2/10/26	
WeatherFlowTempest	Benjamin Miller	VA	Industry/Private Sector	9/3/25	
RCOAST	Christy Swann	LA	Industry/Private Sector	3/25/26	
USC Arnold School of Public Health	Dwayne Porter	SC	Academic/Research/Education	10/1/25	
USC College of Arts and Sciences	George Voulgaris	SC	Academic/Research/Education	5/8/25	
Individual					
Organization	Representative	State	Sector	Date Received	Board of Directors
Dialytics, Inc.	Cliff Merz	FL	At Large	7/8/25	
Tetra Tech	Erin Hague	FL	At Large	8/11/25	Y (7/1/2023)
Emeritus	Peter Hamilton	NC	At Large	10/1/25	
Public Seat					
Organization	Representative	State	Sector	Date Received	Board of Directors
Jeff Copeland	Jeff Copeland	VA	Public Seat	n/a	Y (7/1/2025)