



*Ed Saade, Chair*

*Julie Thomas, Vice-Chair*

April 27, 2021

Mr. Benjamin Friedman  
Deputy Under Secretary for Operations  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Mr. Friedman:

The Hydrographic Services Review Panel (HSRP) appreciates your attending our Spring 2021 meeting. Thank you for sharing the administration's key priorities on climate change, scientific integrity, inclusion of services and outreach to under-represented communities, and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) focus on blue jobs and the economy. This letter summarizes the meeting discussions and the recommendations of the HSRP. The HSRP agrees climate change is an existential threat to our society. We must all prepare for this threat through data driven scientific advances that address coastal resilience and adaptation in NOAA's broader portfolio of Navigation Services. The HSRP will discuss the equity of services you noted, and consider suggestions focused on diversity and inclusion for programs within the Navigation Services hiring pipeline.

The meeting emphasized the broader aspects of climate change and resilience and its alignment with the NOAA Navigation Services portfolio. Nicole LeBoeuf and the National Ocean Service (NOS) director's presentations were extremely informative regarding their priorities and on-going projects, including highlighting their resilience portfolios. The HSRP is impressed with how NOAA has addressed the COVID challenges and continued to perform vital services.

A brief summary of the HSRP discussions and recommendations follows:

- 1) Enhance collaborations with other federal agencies with similar coastal resilience missions/initiatives, as well as with academics, and stakeholders including state & local agencies/organizations, NGOs and industry, knowing that accurate land elevations, nearshore bathymetry and water levels drive inundation modeling. We recognize the importance of both the National Spatial Reference System (NSRS) and the National Water Level Observation Network (NWLON) which provide the foundational reference framework for navigation and resilience activities and all geospatial data acquired and used by the public and private sectors.
  - Continue to provide technical assistance to FEMA and other partners to explore full leveraging of time-dependent NSRS features through data-driven case studies;
- 2) Continue to advance the modernization of the NSRS and fulfil GRAV-D requirements.
- 3) In regard to the National Ocean Mapping Exploration, and Characterization's (NOMECE), prioritize hydrographic survey activity in the less than 40 meters depth as accurate and updated nearshore data are critical to both coastal navigation and coastal resilience.
- 4) Continue the expansion of the Precision Marine Navigation Services, including development of the new data gateway for the S-100 products.

- 5) Improve NOAA's internal resource and information sharing between the Navigation and Resilience mission areas, which rely upon the same foundational data;
- 6) Invest in higher spatial and temporal-resolution nearshore data collection (waves, bathymetry, water levels, etc);
  - Consider the approaches of the bathymetry source project and NSRS modernization, which ease data standards when sensible to improve resolution.
- 7) Expand stakeholder outreach and education for the conversion to Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs) and highlight new tools and options such as the custom chart tool and other navigation tools tailored for both commercial and recreational boaters.

As documented in the attached Priorities Matrix, the HSRP will continue to follow and requests updates on the NOMEAC and the Alaska Coastal Mapping Strategy (ACMS) implementation plans, the address the role of NOAA and the technology in navigating vessels in low visibility (fog), and the progress regarding federal, state and local partnerships. The HSRP is discussing the development of wind farms, especially the sharing of data, and recognizing the support from the Biden Administration in the recent infrastructure plan.

As Nicole LeBoeuf mentioned, the HSRP and NOAA are well positioned to address your administration priorities focused on climate change, data and resilience.

Sincerely,



Edward Saade  
Chair, HSRP



Julie Thomas  
Vice Chair, HSRP

Attachments:  
HSRP Priorities Matrix  
HSRP Meeting Minutes