



*Julie Thomas, Chair*  
*Sean M. Duffy, Sr., Vice-Chair*  
September 27, 2021

Dr. Richard W. Spinrad  
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
and NOAA Administrator  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Dr. Spinrad,

The Hydrographic Services Review Panel (HSRP) was thrilled to have you participate in our Fall 2021 meeting which occurred during and immediately after Hurricane Ida and highlighted the importance of National Ocean Service's hurricane response efforts. Attached please find a testimonial letter from the HSRP co-chair who used NOAA's data to plan and then evacuated prior and during the HSRP meeting and relied on NOAA response efforts to reopen commerce on the Mississippi River.

Thank you for sharing the administration's key priority missions including agnostic climate services and products, economic development while balancing environmental stewardship with the new Blue Economy and equitable distribution of product and services. The HSRP appreciates the challenge that you highlighted in thinking about how the National Ocean Service (NOS) can proceed with partnering and encouraging innovation, new business development and ensuring equity and racial justice in the products that are delivered. These are all topics that the HSRP recognizes and are already pro-active as exemplified in the meeting with an all-female technical panel for the Offshore Wind Energy and Ocean Mapping panel.

The HSRP meeting emphasized the broader aspects of climate change and resilience and its alignment with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Navigation Services portfolio within the Office of Coast Survey, National Geodetic Survey and the Center for Operational Oceanographic Products and Services. Nicole LeBoeuf, Mark Osler, and the NOS and University of New Hampshire Director's presentations were extremely informative regarding their priorities and ongoing projects, including highlighting their resilience portfolios. As mentioned in our previous letters to the Administrator, the HSRP recognizes the importance, funding, and updating 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. NOAA should continually invest in these key infrastructure. We realize the benefit of continuing with the modernization of the NSRS to fulfil the Gravity for the Redefinition of the American Vertical Datum (GRAV-D) requirements. The HSRP also continues to advocate for the expansion of stakeholder outreach and education for transition to Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs) and to highlight new tools and options such as the custom chart tool and other navigation tools tailored for both commercial and recreational boaters. The meeting received a good amount of public comments – including on the charting and safety with a record number of new boaters during covid-19 as well as a broad range of other topics. The HSRP is

impressed with how NOAA has addressed the COVID challenges and continues to perform vital services during this difficult time.

There were two very informative panels held at our meeting.

- Offshore Wind Energy and Ocean Mapping: A Paradigm for Geoscience Data and Information Sharing.
- Technology for nearshore Mapping in less than 40 meters.

Following are the HSRP recommendations:

- 1) Enhance collaborations with other federal agencies and industry for innovation and the new Blue Economy. There are many innovative developments with regard to navigation and mapping that could benefit NOAA's Blue Economy, Precision Navigation and climate change missions.
- 2) A broad theme of data management was prevalent throughout both the panel on Offshore Wind Energy and Ocean Mapping and the panel on Shallow Water Surveys. The HSRP is interested in following how NOAA will address this vast amount of data in the future. The HSRP asks NOAA to play a significant role by planning for and contributing resources for a magnitude increase for data ingestion and data sharing. The HSRP will be interested to follow and advise on NOAA plans, updates, and to continue further discussion on large data management.
- 3) With regards to mapping in waters less than 40 meters depth, the depth of greatest need for surveys conducted to modern standards, NOAA should continue to seek and ramp up research and testing. Innovative partnerships should be developed, and through these partnerships highlight the ability to implement new technologies. NOAA should be aiming at applying the appropriate complementary technologies to address each area to optimize completion of the task. What's good in Alaska will not likely be the same in the Gulf of Mexico or the remote Pacific Islands. The HSRP regularly discusses and will be eager to hear more about NOAA's research on novel technologies to help address a faster response for mapping in waters less than 40 meters.

As documented in the attached Priorities Matrix, the HSRP will continue to follow topics addressing climate and the economy. We will be updating several of our Issue Papers including those on Coastal Resilience, Precision Navigation, Private/Public Partnerships, Recreational Boating and Climate Services which include a deeper dive on timely topics and additional recommendations for the NOAA Administrator. The HSRP looks forward to a productive year and to further communication with you and NOS leadership.

Sincerely,



Julie Thomas  
Chair, HSRP



Sean Duffy  
Vice Chair, HSRP

Attachments:

HSRP Priorities Matrix

HSRP Meeting Minutes

Testimonial letter to NOAA during Hurricane IDA, Sean M. Duffy, Sr., HSRP co-chair