



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

JUL 27 2017

Mr. William Hanson
Chair
Hydrographic Services Review Panel
Federal Advisory Committee
330 13th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20002

Dear Mr. Hanson:

Thank you for your letter following the April 2017 meeting of the Hydrographic Services Review Panel (HSRP) in Seattle, Washington, and your words of support for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) navigation services mission and the agency's important work. Dr. W. Russell Callender, Assistant Administrator, Office of the National Ocean Service, reported the Seattle meeting was strategic and showcased the Pacific Northwest as well as national concerns with robust regional stakeholder participation.

I appreciate the three issue papers and recommendations to NOAA. I will share them with NOAA offices and our stakeholders per your request. These papers are a strong addition to the six prior issue papers the HSRP provided to NOAA. I appreciate the emphasis of the HSRP on data and infrastructure. NOAA's foundational positioning, ocean observation, and charting services provide the information infrastructure that supports critical decisions not just for the maritime sector, but for moving freight, people and energy through all transportation modes from coast to coast.

I understand the HSRP continues to discuss improved collaboration between NOAA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on federal channel navigation for harbors, channels and anchorages and that Rear Admiral Shepard M. Smith provided updates on these topics to the HSRP. I share the HSRP's desire to ensure our harbors, channels, and designated anchorages are surveyed to the relevant national and international standards including object detection for safe navigation. NOAA has made the USACE partnership a priority.

Below are comments on the three issue papers. NOAA will review your input as it continues to look at navigation and charting improvements for the Pacific Northwest and nationally.

On the paper, "Recreational Boating," NOAA agrees that recreational users are an important constituency and will continue to provide and improve their access to NOAA navigation services such as tides, currents, charts, and other products. NOAA continues to evaluate unmanned and autonomous systems to look at the most efficient and effective data acquisition paradigms and models. NOAA appreciates the HSRP's recommendation to greatly expand crowd-sourced data and is beginning to explore what data use is possible in this area.



On the paper, "Surveying and Charting in U.S. Channels, Harbors, and Anchorages," NOAA appreciates the HSRP recommendations to establish procedures and strive to ensure these key areas are surveyed to International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) Order 1A standards, including object detection, as well as charted with IHO-standard data-quality indicators. NOAA will continue collaboration with USACE over data exchange and posting to ensure safe navigation.

On the paper, "Improving Access for U.S. Nautical Charts: Using multiple data sources to produce more accurate and detailed charts," NOAA appreciates your validation of the use of externally sourced data and agrees that NOAA should evaluate and incorporate the best available survey data. I appreciate the recommendation to include robust stakeholder engagement for the proposed changes as well.

I look forward to welcoming in a new NOAA Administrator and for the HSRP to provide ongoing dialogue and strategic advice to improve NOAA's navigation services portfolio.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ben" followed by a stylized flourish that extends into a long horizontal line.

Ben Friedman
Deputy Under Secretary for Operation
Performing the duties of Under Secretary
of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere
and NOAA Administrator