



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

AUG 27 2015

Mr. Scott Perkins  
Chair, Hydrographic Services Review Panel  
P.O. Box 26384  
Overland Park, KS 66225

Dear Mr. Perkins:

Thank you for your letter sent on behalf of the Hydrographic Services Review Panel (HSRP), summarizing the Panel's views and recommendations regarding utilization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) hydrographic fleet and the application of precision navigation. I am aware that you had a productive meeting in Long Beach, CA, and your letter reflects that effort. I also appreciate being apprised of your outreach efforts and the formation of four Working Groups to focus the Panel's efforts on legislation and policy, Arctic, planning and engagement, and coastal intelligence and resilience.

I understand Dr. Russell Callender has requested that the Panel address questions regarding coastal resilience, national charting priorities, stakeholder engagement, and criteria pertaining to precise navigation for ports, and I look forward to hearing the results of your discussions.

The Panel's concerns and recommendations regarding NOAA fleet support for hydrographic surveying are well founded, and I share your concerns. Vessels operating beyond their end of service life directly impact vessel availability, and the ability to provide necessary personnel training and experience. NOAA will continue to address these significant impacts through both short-term and long-term solutions.

I also agree with the Arctic survey priority you mentioned. NOAA is working extensively in the Arctic this summer; the *Rainier* and *Fairweather* are estimated to survey 487 square nautical miles. The NOAA Ship *Fairweather* collected hydrographic data and mapped shallow, rocky areas within 36 hours of the incident with the icebreaker *Fennica*, highlighting NOAA's capability and timely response to critical navigation needs.

I share your excitement about NOAA's innovative precision navigation work in the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, CA, and I am encouraged by the potential expansion of this work to other major U.S. seaports. NOAA welcomes and appreciates the Panel's support for this initiative and any suggestions you may have on how NOAA could strategically target future precise navigation products and services, and how to leverage partnerships, in order to optimize these efforts.



Please extend my appreciation to all the Panel members for their time and dedication to improving NOAA's navigation services through participation in this Federal Advisory Committee. Your insights will be helpful to NOAA in setting our strategic directions in these areas. I look forward to speaking with you at your next meeting in Washington, DC this September.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KDS', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kathryn D. Sullivan, Ph.D.  
Under Secretary of Commerce  
for Oceans and Atmosphere

cc: William Hanson, Vice Chair,  
Hydrographic Services Review Panel