



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

AUG 19 2014

Mr. Scott Perkins
Chair, Hydrographic Services Review Panel
Quantum Spatial
5700 Broadmoor Street, Suite 202
Mission, KS 66202-2402

Dear Mr. Perkins:

Thank you for Mr. Wellslager's recent summary of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Hydrographic Services Review Panel (HSRP) meeting held in New York City, New York, on February 25-26, 2014. I welcome and appreciate the panel's recommendations from this meeting.

I am pleased that the HSRP continues to reach out to local and regional stakeholders on NOAA's navigation services to help identify the agency's priority issues. The reports you heard from NOAA's stakeholders in the New York metropolitan area underscore the importance of NOAA's navigation products and services in support of safe navigation, emergency response, and coastal resilience.

Specific responses to the HSRP's recommendations are provided below.

Recommendation #1: *Integrated Federal Emergency Response for Coastal Resilience*

- **NOAA should establish detailed Pre-scripted Mission Assignments (PSMA) with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in advance of natural disasters and other emergencies.**

NOAA Response: NOAA concurs with the intent of this recommendation. We will continue to work with FEMA, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to establish appropriate mission assignment options that use NOAA's expertise and capabilities.

Recommendation #2: *Updated Nautical Charting & Consistency in Standards*

- **NOAA's Office of Coast Survey should accelerate transition to a database-driven workflow for NOAA's Electronic Navigational Charts (ENCs) to produce charts in a modern and efficient way.**

NOAA Response: NOAA is accelerating its transition toward a modern and efficient ENC production process, through improved workflows and a restructuring of Coast



Survey's Marine Chart Division. As part of this initiative, NOAA will continue to implement database production changes, in line with HSRP's recommendation to accelerate the approach. The transition will require re-training of the workforce, developing new workflows for common source types, instituting major upgrades to internal databases, and adopting technology improvements for chart production systems. NOAA has started to commit the resources and leadership needed to complete this transition over the next several years. Once complete, changes to ENC's will be made first and the updated charts will be available weekly. NOAA will continue to make critical raster and paper chart updates weekly.

- **NOAA's Office of Coast Survey should coordinate with USACE to develop an efficient mechanism for USACE channel surveys to enhance safety of navigation in Federally maintained channels.**

NOAA Response: NOAA recognizes the significant opportunity to re-envision how authoritative channel condition data is provided to the public, as well as the systems that NOAA and USACE use to manage this information. We are exploring new ways to portray USACE channel data on our charts. USACE is launching a new geographic database of channel condition surveys called "E-Hydro" which, when fully implemented, will increase the efficiency of applying channel data to our charts.

Recommendation #3: *Integrated Ocean & Coastal Mapping (IOCM) Modeling & Resilience*

- **NOAA should prioritize IOCM activities and support with top-down emphasis, including funding specifically for IOCM projects and making IOCM an element in performance plans for appropriate management personnel; expand IOCM working agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) procedures for other agencies to establish agreements to leverage mappings funds for the greatest utility; improve on existing IOCM coordination efforts such as data catalogs and planning registries by incorporating broader groups of partners; and continue to investigate new technologies and the capabilities of the private sector for improving mapping efficiencies.**

NOAA Response: NOAA supports the recommendations to expand IOCM working agreements and MOUs, incorporate a broader range of partner data and plans into IOCM coordination efforts, and investigate new technologies and private sector capabilities to improve mapping efficiencies. NOAA has performance milestones to advance these types of activities in its Annual Operating Plans and roadmaps, and we will continue to set milestones in the future. We will also explore the feasibility of including IOCM as a required element for program managers. (This recommendation is intriguing for its potential to advance IOCM goals through performance reviews.)

Please extend my appreciation to all the HSRP members for their dedication to strengthening NOAA's navigation products and services. I look forward to meeting with and hearing from the HSRP in the future and, as always, value the panel's contribution to fulfilling NOAA's mission.

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: Holly A. Bamford, Ph.D.
Russell Callender, Ph.D.