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The Hydrographic Services Review Panel conducted its semiannual meeting May 22-24, 2012, in Anchorage, AK. The five newly appointed HSRP Panel members were sworn in by Dr. Kathryn D. Sullivan, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction at the HSRP Anchorage meeting. The new members are eager and much appreciative to have the opportunity to serve on this important federal advisory committee.

The importance of HSRP meeting is clearly shown by Alaska's Lt. Governor Mead Treadwell and State Representative and Alaska Native Reggie Joule addressing the panel. The Lieutenant Governor provided a compelling keynote address defining some critical issues facing the state of Alaska and its citizens. These issues include: coastal erosion and storm damage; sea level rise; increased Arctic shipping; marine safety and search and rescue; mining, oil and gas exploration; and fishing and tourism. He emphasized the importance and need for NOAA's navigation data, products, and services to address these issues. Specifically, improved NOAA ice forecasts to fill existing gaps in the Arctic observation data; comprehensive hydrographic surveying data to update the NOAA charts for the Alaskan and Arctic shipping routes; expansion of NOAA's tides and currents data products for support of the shipping and fishing industry; and increased statewide digital mapping.

- Lt. Governor Treadwell specifically asked the HSRP panel to ensure that the Committee on Marine Transportation System (CMTS) Arctic Transportation Policy Paper now being co-written by NOAA, the Coast Guard and the Maritime Administration should include Alaska's hydrographic needs and strategies.

The Honorable Reggie Joule, in his role as the Chair of the Alaska Northern Waters Task Force (NUTF) provided an undeniable perspective of the impacts of increased marine transportation, oil, gas and mineral expansion, Arctic fishing, tourism, etc., on the natural resources and economy of Alaska. Representative Joule also talked about the findings and recommendations of the NUTF January 2012 report. Specifically, he reiterated the

NWTF recommendation that, “the Alaska NWTF supports increased funding to expedite NOAA’s Hydrographic Arctic mapping and updated mapping of coastal navigation and village entrance routes.” The HSRP considers that Representative Joule’s recommendation should be accepted as a high priority requirement by NOAA.

Dr. Sullivan presented the Lt. Governor and Representative Joule with a copy of the new Kotzebue Sound navigation chart (which included the most updated tide gauge data, shoreline measurements; and hydrographic surveying data for the Kotzebue village on the northwest coast of Alaska). Representative Joule holds residency in Kotzebue and this newly printed navigation chart was very much appreciated by him.

The following recommendations on critical need for improvements to NOAA’s navigation and meteorological data, products and services for the Alaska and Arctic region came from our HSRP working groups: Legislative and Policy Initiatives, Strategic Mission – Centered Effectiveness, and Emerging Arctic Priorities, and input from the stakeholder panels and breakout sessions in Anchorage.

- NOAA should develop a "Frontier Mapping Strategy" that includes gathering data that is "fit for use". This is not a charting strategy, rather an Integrated Ocean and Coastal Mapping (IOCM) approach to multi-purpose data acquisition that leverages every opportunity amidst the challenges of operating in the harsh Arctic environment. NOAA should provide simple tools (a black box approach) or procedures (readiness of sonars, offsets, calibrations of instruments) so that local vessels can collect IOCM data that would be more useful for a variety of users. Another consideration could be to increase the use of contractors if NOAA does not have assets based in Alaska.
- NOAA should prioritize and support the collection of geodetic data which serves as the foundation for all mapping and charting activities. While progress has been made in some areas of Alaska, the more remote areas present unique challenges to complete. NOAA should seek support and partnerships with other federal, state and local entities for aircraft and ground support to complete GRAV-D and to densify the Continuously Operating Reference Station network. This will allow for accurate heights and positioning in support of remote sensing imagery data sets for coastal management and up-to-date shoreline, improved digital elevation models for mapping, and efficient hydrographic operations.
- NOAA should work with the Coast Guard and Army Corps of Engineers at both local and national levels to coordinate mapping and data collection and to share data. Emphasis should be placed on exploring the availability, and use, of new hydrographic assets/ships for operations in the U.S. maritime Arctic;
  - other federal ships (e.g. USCG assets),
  - the UNOLS/Government Academic fleet (e.g. the new, UAF icebreaking research vessel *Sikuliaq*),
  - commercial ice-capable & charter assets in the region, particularly those associated with offshore oil and gas development.

- Alaska is considered by many to be the last frontier of the United States. Outreach, partnerships with institutions like the University of Alaska, and adopting Memorandums of Understandings with different state and federal groups interested in spatial data should be considered. Hiring personnel, such as a Geodetic Advisor from the National Geodetic Survey, to serve as the focal point for geodetic issues, tides and currents, datums, navigation products and services, and, most importantly, stakeholder engagement would be very beneficial.

These recommendations support issues identified in NOAA's Arctic Vision and Strategy, NOAA's goal for Resilient Coastal Communities and Economies, and the mission of the HSRP as a federal advisory committee. The HSRP greatly appreciated the participation of senior level NOAA leadership at the meeting. It is our hope that you and your NOAA leadership team will read this letter and strongly consider the HSRP recommendations as you plan for 2013 and beyond.

Any questions you may have concerning this letter I will gladly answer to the best of my capabilities.

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Wellslager, Chair Hydrographic Services Review Panel

cc. Dr. Kathryn Sullivan, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Policy, Deputy Administrator and Acting Chief Scientist, David M. Kennedy, Assistant Administrator, NOAA National Ocean Service, Dr. Holly Bamford, Deputy Assistant Administrator, NOAA National Ocean Service