

DRAFT as of December 11, 2009 – 6:30 pm

December 16, 2009

Jane Lubchenco, Ph.D.
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Room 6217
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Dr. Lubchenco:

On behalf of the Hydrographic Services Review Panel, a federal advisory committee, I am pleased to report on the most recent HSRP meeting in Duluth, Minnesota, on September 23-24, 2009. This was the HSRP's first meeting in the Great Lakes.

Comment [rla1]: I added Dick's edits

Agenda items included:

- Presentations by Great Lakes stakeholders who use NOAA's hydrographic and geodetic products, including representatives of the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Transportation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Coast Guard;
- a summary of NOAA's efforts to map the shorelines of the Great Lakes;
- a presentation about NOAA's efforts to accelerate the integration of collected hydrographic data into nautical charts (a process known as "ping to chart");
- a review of NOAA's proposed revisions to its contracting policy for hydrographic services;
- discussion of the valuable roles played by state geodetic advisors;
- a proposal to update and reaffirm the 2007 document entitled "HSRP Most Wanted Services Improvements;" and
- a briefing on how NOAA is using supplemental funding provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (economic stimulus legislation) to enhance hydrographic services.

At nearly every meeting, HSRP members learn of unexpected ways in which NOAA's hydrographic and geodetic data is valuable. For example, in Duluth, Richard Morey from the Minnesota Department of Transportation explained that geodetic information from CORS (Continually Operating Reference System) is used during whiteout conditions to guide snowplows. The snowplows have displays in the plows that tie into CORS and are used by the operators to guide the snowplows. Another use of CORS is in precision agriculture, allowing more efficient use of resources and fertilizer application, and helping minimize runoff and water contamination.

Based on information it learns at its meetings, the HSRP customarily makes recommendations to NOAA. Here are recommendations emerging from the Duluth meeting:

- The HSRP finds that NOAA's existing Hydrographic Services Contracting Policy is fairly and adequately constructed. The HSRP recommends that NOAA limit revisions to the policy, making only those precise language changes required to conform to the Ocean and Coastal Mapping Integration Act.
- Noting the beneficial uses of ARRA funding to enhance NOAA hydrographic services, the HSRP recommends that NOAA keep on hand proposals for accelerated "ready-to-go" hydrographic services that could be suggested for inclusion in any future economic stimulus or supplemental appropriations to be developed by Congress and the Executive Branch.
- The HSRP recommends that in order to improve the general professional level of the hydrographic services field, NOAA consider supporting a more robust national hydrographic certification program than exists today for government and private sector hydrographers. NOAA should work with the various state boards of registration for land surveyors, other federal agencies, the American Congress on Surveying and Mapping, FIG (International Federal of Surveyors) and the International Hydrographic Organization, academia and the private sector to evaluate benefits and approaches to enhancing hydrographer skills and qualifications.
- The HSRP recommends that NOAA work with states to support and build awareness of expand the state geodetic advisor program, with particular emphasis on the 14 states not currently served. State geodetic advisors have traditionally been responsible for the transfer of technology, "know how," and procedures to survey professionals so that local and statewide surveys meet federal standards and practices. NOAA believes, and the HSRP concurs, that advisors can evolve from data gatherers to spatial information managers.

Comment [rla2]: This is the only one voted on at the Duluth meeting.

Comment [rla3]: I added Larry's edits.

Comment [rla4]: I added edits from Doug Brown. Although Doug spoke about expanding the program in his talk at Duluth, the recommendation has not been approved by the NGS Executive Steering Committee yet – so Doug asked us to amend the wording to what is here.

Comment [rla5]: I added Larry's edits.

In conclusion, we wish to express appreciation to you for the continued excellent support for the HSRP by numerous individuals throughout NOAA, and particularly for the time that so many professionals within NOAA plan for, make presentations to, and attend HSRP meetings. The next HSRP meeting will be in Providence, Rhode Island, on March

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17-18, 2010. We would be delighted to have you and your executive leadership team participate in that event.

Sincerely,

Edmund B. Welch
Deputy Chair
Hydrographic Services Review Panel