



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

June 08, 2022

Ms. Julie Thomas
Chair, Hydrographic Services Review Panel
Senior Advisor, Coastal Data Information Program
and Southern California Coastal Ocean Observing System
Scripps Institute of Oceanography
9500 Gilman Drive, No. 0214
La Jolla, CA 92093

Dear Ms. Thomas:

Thank you for your letter and for your ongoing, focused engagement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Hydrographic Services Review Panel (HSRP) Federal Advisory Committee.

I appreciate the HSRP's time and attention in providing feedback and recommendations on topics discussed at the March 2022 HSRP meeting. I have reviewed the six recommendations, the response regarding "Data Licensing Request from OCS," and the three issue papers titled: "Private/Public Partnerships," "Electronic Navigation Charts (ENC) and Paper Charts for Small Vessels," and "NSRS: All U.S. Latitudes, Longitudes, and Elevations to Change." I will take these recommendations into consideration and engage with senior leadership across NOAA on these issues.

The HSRP's comments on data licensing provide sound guidance and concrete considerations for the NOAA Office of Coast Survey (OCS) as they move forward with implementation. In addition, as outlined in the NOAA Data Strategy, the process that OCS is developing and the experience they are gaining will inform our efforts to implement data licensing more broadly across NOAA. I have asked the OCS Director and the NOAA Chief Data Officer to draw upon this guidance and also to keep the HSRP apprised of their progress.

The recommendations included in the issue paper on the National Spatial Reference System (NSRS) recognize the immense value that modernizing our foundational geospatial infrastructure will provide to the Nation's economy. Furthermore, the issue paper acknowledges the essential role that NSRS plays in helping us understand and respond to the impacts of climate change. NOAA is committed to prioritizing the completion of the Modernized National Spatial Reference System, ensuring that the vital products NOAA and our partners produce will take full advantage of the dramatic improvements in accuracy, consistency and coverage areas, as well as the billions of dollars in related benefits that the modernized NSRS will provide.

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The issue paper on electronic navigational charts and paper charts for small vessels provided valuable recommended actions. As NOAA transitions away from traditional paper and raster nautical charts towards Electronic Navigational Charts (ENC) as our premier navigational product, we continue to support the safe navigation of all mariners on the water, including small vessels and recreational boaters. OCS will continue to develop the NOAA Custom Chart tool to provide an equivalent paper product, derived from ENC data, which can augment electronic navigation and provide enhanced situational awareness. In addition, OCS will continue to work closely with its partners from around the globe to develop international standards for paper charts created from ENC data.

I firmly agree with HSRP's recommendation regarding public and private partnerships as part of a strategy for more efficiently collecting critical mapping data, while working within the existing limitations of the Federal budget planning, allocation, and execution process. I will share this paper with the relevant NOAA programs including, but not limited to, the Integrated Ocean and Coastal Mapping program and Remote Sensing group for their review.

Finally, the HSRP's recommendation to continue the emphasis on equity, diversity, inclusiveness, and acceptance in all of NOAA's work speaks to a personal core value and one of my three main priorities as the NOAA Administrator. I look forward to engaging more with the panel on this in the future.

The HSRP serves as a valuable resource to NOAA – with its committee members experienced in all aspects of improving the quality, efficiency, and usefulness of NOAA's navigation-related products, data, and services. The recommendations the panel provides are both pertinent and timely. I look forward to our continued dialogue on strategic issues of importance to NOAA, the Department of Commerce, and the Biden-Harris Administration, including climate adaptation and resilience, equity and diversity, and sustainable economic development. I will continue to share our priorities with you, particularly where they relate to HSRP's past and current recommendations.

Again, I appreciate these recommendations and papers, as well as the ongoing expertise the HSRP provides.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard W. Spinrad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "S".

Dr. Richard W. Spinrad
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
and NOAA Administrator