NOAA Hydrographic Services Review Panel Meeting
August 28-30, 2018, Juneau Alaska
Public Statement

Thank you, HSRP, for choosing beautiful Juneau for your meeting location. My name is Rada Khadjinova. I have been living and working in Alaska for over 25 years. I am the general manager for Fugro's Alaska Office. Fugro is the world's leading independent provider of geo-intelligence and asset integrity solutions for large constructions, infrastructure and natural resources.

Prior to my work at Fugro, I held management positions within state government, academia, and other private sector firms. I have been, and remain, an active volunteer with professional nonprofit organizations, serving on various boards of directors. Most recently, I was appointed to the board of the Alaska Resource Development Council, which represents interests of Alaska's major resource industries: oil and gas, mining, fisheries, timber, and tourism. These industries make great use of geospatial data, hence my interest in the HSRP meeting.

It's no secret that Alaska's charting backlog remains formidable, deserving your continued vigilance. However, this tough challenge has a responsible owner. Today, I want to address a need that's yet to be adopted by a responsible owner—Alaska's coastal mapping.

Alaska's coasts deserve attention. In addition to having the longest coastline in the US and boasting the nation's largest fishery, Alaska is the only state with access to Arctic waters. In the coming years we see numerous opportunities and challenges. From the opening of new Arctic sea routes for shipping and tourism, to agreements on international maritime boundaries, to a growing demand for commercial fishing, to new offshore and onshore hydrocarbon and mineral development. The future of Alaska's coastal zone is of national consequence, impacting national security, maritime transportation, economic development, and energy policy.

Growing Alaska's blue economy while managing effects of climate and sea level change will require shared access to coastal mapping data, which merges shallow water, shoreline, and coastal elevation datasets for seamless depictions of the land-sea interface. These data serve users from across the government spectrum, including tribal, local, state, and federal agencies, enabling economic development, coastal resource management and efficient governance of numerous coastal issues.

And while a comprehensive coastal mapping program does not yet exist in Alaska, stakeholder engagement to form one is well underway. This February, more than 100 government and private sector leaders met in Anchorage to discuss data gaps, acquisition challenges, and success stories during the second Alaska Coastal Mapping Summit. As an output of the summit, a strategic plan to guide Alaska's coastal mapping program is anticipated for release later this year.

It is also encouraging to see NOAA as a newly minted co-chair of the Alaska Mapping Executive Committee, an interagency working group designed to maximize collaboration and efficiency with which elevation data is acquired and shared. We are beginning to see the same spirit of collaboration for statewide coastal datasets that we saw a decade ago for statewide topographic datasets.

As we know from the topographic mapping program, the path forward requires a shared commitment among all stakeholders to systematically collect authoritative datasets that can be shared across user groups for maximum benefit. For the private sector, our commitment is expressed in how we approach each project, often integrating multiple technologies and platforms to balance cost, quality, and safety expectations. This commitment is evident in many activities, including technical innovations and new

generations of sensors; advanced processes that enable multi-stream data collections; novel approaches that accelerate collection pace during short Alaska field season; in-kind data contributions and quality assessment of crowd sourced data, just to name a few.

It is important to note that data needs should remain central to developing data specifications. It takes time and effort to prioritize plans, enable data integration, and develop optimal data specifications acceptable to multiple users. The private sector is a great resource for developing efficient scopes of work and thus should have a seat at the table to provide their professional input.

It should also be noted that in Alaska, environmental permitting has been the longest-lead activity for infrastructure or resource development project, taking anywhere from 5 to 25 years or more with no certainty in the permitting outcome. And while we see and applaud administrative improvements in some agencies, there is plenty to improve upon.

One of the best things government can do to reduce environmental permitting uncertainty is to acquire authoritative baseline data, in this case we are talking about upfront collection of land and marine elevation data. This data, depicting "natural infrastructure," gives regulatory agencies information not only to make good management decisions, but also to withstand legal scrutiny once decisions are made, thereby reducing cost and schedule impacts for all parties. In addition, this data is relevant to the missions of many agencies and can benefit research and private sector projects at every stage of the project, from pre-feasibility to decommissioning.

The needs for a coastal mapping program are clear. Here is what I would like to ask of HSRP and others who can positively influence coastal mapping program implementation:

- Deliver systematic and transparent updates on progress toward goals and objectives stated in the Alaska Coastal Mapping Summit report and continue the Alaska Coastal Mapping Summit on an annual basis;
- Support and improve the effectiveness of an existing framework by which multiple agencies can contribute funds and specify their coastal mapping priorities;
- Consider meaningful contributions or inputs the state can champion to kickstart the planning phase of the program recognizing its current economic situation; after all, prioritizing data needs and developing acceptable data specifications is arguably the longest lead but also the lowest-cost activity;
- Incentivize industry to come up with ideas for authoritative data collections through unconventional methods. This can be accomplished through a competition of ideas with a contract award or some other notable motivation for the best solutions;

Thank you,

Rada Khadjinova
General Manager, Alaska
T +1 907 267 7012 | |C +1 907 227 2995| F+1 907 561 5123
rkhadjinova@fugro.com | http://www.fugro.com
Fugro USA, Inc.
5761 Silverado Way, Suite O, Anchorage, AK 99518, USA