**NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ENGINEERING, AND MEDICINE**

**OCEAN STUDIES BOARD**

**POLAR RESEARCH BOARD**

**MARINE BOARD**

**Scoping Session on Marine Arctic Infrastructure**

**to be held in conjunction with the fall Ocean Studies Board meeting**

**Kotzebue AK 11 Sept 2018**

As an Arctic nation, the United States has a strong interest in how the changing Arctic marine environment will affect major economic activities such as shipping, mining, oil and gas exploration, fishing, and tourism. These activities are expanding as access to Arctic waters increases with the retreat of Arctic sea ice. However, because of the remote nature of this region, there has been a relative lack of investment in the infrastructure necessary to support these activities. These investment deficits – such as nautical charts, aids to navigation, telecommunications, and emergency-response and rescue capabilities – present barriers for continued economic development, as well as safe and effective operations in the U.S. Arctic.

Lack of infrastructure investments has been noted in the Arctic Council's *Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment* (2009), which includes a section on the gap in marine infrastructure.  In addition, the U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System (CMTS) issued a 2016 report (*A Ten-Year Prioritization of Infrastructure Needs in the U.S. Arctic)* that addresses federal marine transportation interests, but does not provide a comprehensive assessment of marine infrastructure needs that would include private sector, scientific, and state infrastructure needs, among others.

In cooperation with the Polar Research Board and the Marine Board, the Ocean Studies Board at the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) proposes to host a one-day meeting in Fairbanks, AK, in conjunction with the Ocean Studies Board meeting. The meeting will explore the issue of marine infrastructure needs in the US Arctic and determine if this is a topic that would benefit from a focused NASEM activity, and if so, the type of activity that would best meet the needs of potential sponsors.

Topics for discussion may include (adopted from suggestions provided by Lawson Brigham):

* Current status of U.S. Arctic marine infrastructure & capacities;
* Marine infrastructure assets to address federal mandates & responsibilities (for example, OCS leasing, hydrography/charting requirements);
* Infrastructure to support marine operations in the Arctic
* Projection of future research and observational marine infrastructure;
* Infrastructure for environmental stewardship and safety of Arctic coastal communities;
* Potential funding strategies & mechanisms, such as public-private partnerships.

The meeting will feature a few invited speakers to provide summaries of these topics. This will be followed by panel discussion(s) composed of representatives from the relevant federal and state agencies, marine industries, and other interested parties. The meeting will conclude with a discussion of the potential value of a NASEM activity (such as a study or workshop) to advance plans for marine infrastructure in the US Arctic.

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