

# **Hydrographic Services Improvement Act of 1998 (P.L. 105–384), as amended in 2002 (P.L. 107–372) and 2008 (P.L. 110–386)**

## **33 U.S.C. §892. Definitions**

In this subchapter:

### **(1) Administrator**

The term “Administrator” means the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

### **(2) Administration**

The term “Administration” means the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

### **(3) Hydrographic data**

The term “hydrographic data” means information that—

(A) is acquired through—

(i) hydrographic, bathymetric, photogrammetric, lidar, radar, remote sensing, or shoreline and other ocean- and coastal-related surveying;

(ii) geodetic, geospatial, or geomagnetic measurements;

(iii) tide, water level, and current observations; or

(iv) other methods; and

(B) is used in providing hydrographic services.

### **(4) Hydrographic services**

The term “hydrographic services” means—

(A) the management, maintenance, interpretation, certification, and dissemination of bathymetric, hydrographic, shoreline, geodetic, geospatial, geomagnetic, and tide, water level, and current information, including the production of nautical charts, nautical information databases, and other products derived from hydrographic data;

(B) the development of nautical information systems; and

(C) related activities.

### **(5) Coast and Geodetic Survey Act**

The term “Coast and Geodetic Survey Act” means the Act entitled “An Act to define the functions and duties of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, and for other purposes”, approved August 6, 1947 (33 U.S.C. 883a et seq.).

### **33 U.S.C. §892a. Functions of the Administrator**

#### **(a) Responsibilities**

To fulfill the data gathering and dissemination duties of the Administration under the Coast and Geodetic Survey Act, promote safe, efficient and environmentally sound marine transportation, and otherwise fulfill the purposes of this subchapter, the Administrator shall—

- (1) acquire and disseminate hydrographic data and provide hydrographic services;
- (2) promulgate standards for hydrographic data used by the Administration in providing hydrographic services;
- (3) promulgate standards for hydrographic services provided by the Administration;
- (4) ensure comprehensive geographic coverage of hydrographic services, in cooperation with other appropriate Federal agencies;
- (5) maintain a national database of hydrographic data, in cooperation with other appropriate Federal agencies;
- (6) provide hydrographic services in uniform, easily accessible formats;
- (7) participate in the development of, and implement for the United States in cooperation with other appropriate Federal agencies, international standards for hydrographic data and hydrographic services; and
- (8) to the greatest extent practicable and cost-effective, fulfill the requirements of paragraphs (1) and (6) through contracts or other agreements with private sector entities.

#### **(b) Authorities**

To fulfill the data gathering and dissemination duties of the Administration under the Coast and Geodetic Survey Act, promote safe, efficient, and environmentally sound marine transportation, and otherwise fulfill the purposes of this subchapter, subject to the availability of appropriations, the Administrator—

- (1) may procure, lease, evaluate, test, develop, and operate vessels, equipment, and technologies necessary to ensure safe navigation and maintain operational expertise in hydrographic data acquisition and hydrographic services;

(2) shall, subject to the availability of appropriations, design, install, maintain, and operate real-time hydrographic monitoring systems to enhance navigation safety and efficiency;

(3) where appropriate and to the extent that it does not detract from the promotion of safe and efficient navigation, may acquire hydrographic data and provide hydrographic services to support the conservation and management of coastal and ocean resources;

(4) where appropriate, may acquire hydrographic data and provide hydrographic services to save and protect life and property and support the resumption of commerce in response to emergencies, natural and man-made disasters, and homeland security and maritime domain awareness needs, including obtaining mission assignments (as defined in section 741 of title 6);

(5) may create, support, and maintain such joint centers with other Federal agencies and other entities as the Administrator deems appropriate or necessary to carry out the purposes of this subchapter; and

(6) notwithstanding the existence of such joint centers, shall award contracts for the acquisition of hydrographic data in accordance with subchapter VI of chapter 10 of title 40.

**(c) Conservation and management of coastal and ocean resources**

Where appropriate and to the extent that it does not detract from the promotion of safe and efficient navigation, the Secretary may use hydrographic data and services to support the conservation and management of coastal and ocean resources.

**33 U.S.C. §892b. Quality assurance program**

**(a) Definition**

For purposes of this section, the term “hydrographic product” means any publicly or commercially available product produced by a non-Federal entity that includes or displays hydrographic data.

**(b) Program**

**(1) In general**

The Administrator—

(A) by not later than 2 years after December 19, 2002, shall, subject to the availability of appropriations, develop and implement a quality assurance program that is equally available to all applicants, under which the Administrator may certify hydrographic products that satisfy the standards promulgated by the Administrator under section 892a (a)(3) of this title;

(B) may authorize the use of the emblem or any trademark of the Administration on a hydrographic product certified under subparagraph (A); and

(C) may charge a fee for such certification and use.

**(2) Limitation on fee amount**

Any fee under paragraph (1)(C) shall not exceed the costs of conducting the quality assurance testing, evaluation, or studies necessary to determine whether the hydrographic product satisfies the standards adopted under section 892a (a)(3) of this title, including the cost of administering such a program.

**(c) Limitation on liability**

The Government of the United States shall not be liable for any negligence by a person that produces hydrographic products certified under this section.

**(d) Hydrographic Services Account**

**(1) Establishment**

There is established in the Treasury a separate account, which shall be known as the “Hydrographic Services Account”.

**(2) Content**

The account shall consist of—

(A) amounts received by the United States as fees charged under subsection (b)(1)(C) of this section; and

(B) such other amounts as may be provided by law.

**(3) Use**

Amounts in the account shall be available to the Administrator, without further appropriation, for hydrographic services.

**(e) Limitation on new fees and increases in existing fees for hydrographic services**

After November 13, 1998, the Administrator may not—

(1) establish any fee or other charge for the provision of any hydrographic service except as authorized by this section; or

(2) increase the amount of any fee or other charge for the provision of any hydrographic service except as authorized by this section and section 1307 of title 44.

### **33 U.S.C. §892c. Hydrographic Services Review Panel**

#### **(a) Establishment**

No later than 1 year after December 19, 2002, the Secretary shall establish the Hydrographic Services Review Panel.

#### **(b) Duties**

##### **(1) In general**

The panel shall advise the Administrator on matters related to the responsibilities and authorities set forth in section 892a of this title and such other appropriate matters as the Administrator refers to the panel for review and advice.

##### **(2) Administrative resources**

The Administrator shall make available to the panel such information, personnel, and administrative services and assistance as it may reasonably require to carry out its duties.

#### **(c) Membership**

##### **(1) In general**

**(A)** The panel shall consist of 15 voting members who shall be appointed by the Administrator. The Co-directors of the Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping/Joint Hydrographic Center and no more than 2 employees of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration appointed by the Administrator shall serve as nonvoting members of the panel. The voting members of the panel shall be individuals who, by reason of knowledge, experience, or training, are especially qualified in 1 or more of the disciplines and fields relating to hydrographic data and hydrographic services, marine transportation, port administration, vessel pilotage, coastal and fishery management, and other disciplines as determined appropriate by the Administrator.

**(B)** An individual may not be appointed as a voting member of the panel if the individual is a full-time officer or employee of the United States.

**(C)** Any voting member of the panel who is an applicant for, or beneficiary (as determined by the Secretary) of, any assistance under this subchapter shall disclose to the panel that relationship, and may not vote on any matter pertaining to that assistance.

##### **(2) Terms**

**(A)** The term of office of a voting member of the panel shall be 4 years, except that of the original appointees, five shall be appointed for a term of 2 years, five

shall be appointed for a term of 3 years, and five shall be appointed for a term of 4 years, as specified by the Administrator at the time of appointment.

(B) Any individual appointed to a partial or full term may be reappointed for one additional full term. A voting member may serve after the date of the expiration of the term of office for which appointed until his or her successor has taken office.

**(3) Nominations**

At least once each year, the Secretary shall publish a notice in the Federal Register soliciting nominations for membership on the panel.

**(4) Chairman and Vice Chairman**

(A) The panel shall select one voting member to serve as the Chairman and another voting member to serve as the Vice Chairman.

(B) The Vice Chairman shall act as Chairman in the absence or incapacity of the Chairman.

**(d) Compensation**

Voting members of the panel shall—

(1) receive compensation at a rate established by the Secretary, not to exceed the maximum daily rate payable under section 5376 of title 5 when actually engaged in the performance of duties for such panel; and

(2) be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of such duties.

**(e) Meetings**

The panel shall meet on a biannual basis and, at any other time, at the call of the Chairman or upon the request of a majority of the voting members or of the Secretary.

**(f) Powers**

The panel may exercise such powers as are reasonably necessary in order to carry out its duties under subsection (b) of this section.

**33 U.S.C. §892d. Authorization of appropriations**

(a) IN GENERAL.— There are authorized to be appropriated to the Administrator the following:

(1) To carry out nautical mapping and charting functions under sections 892b and 892c of this title, except for conducting hydrographic surveys, \$70,814,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.

(2) To contract for hydrographic surveys under section 892b (b)(1) of this title, including the leasing or time chartering of vessels, \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.

(3) To operate hydrographic survey vessels owned by the United States and operated by the Administration, \$29,932,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.

(4) To carry out geodetic functions under this title, \$26,800,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.

(5) To carry out tide and current measurement functions under this title, \$30,564,000 for each of fiscal years 2016 through 2020.

(6) To acquire a replacement hydrographic survey vessel capable of staying at sea continuously for at least 30 days \$75,000,000.

(b) ARCTIC PROGRAMS.— Of the amount authorized by this section for each fiscal year—

(1) \$10,000,000 is authorized for use—

(A) to acquire hydrographic data;

(B) to provide hydrographic services;

(C) to conduct coastal change analyses necessary to ensure safe navigation;

(D) to improve the management of coastal change in the Arctic; and

(E) to reduce risks of harm to Alaska Native subsistence and coastal communities associated with increased international maritime traffic; and

(2) \$2,000,000 is authorized for use to acquire hydrographic data and provide hydrographic services in the Arctic necessary to delineate the United States extended Continental Shelf.

(c) LIMITATION ON ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES FOR SURVEYS.—Of amounts authorized by this section for each fiscal year for contract hydrographic surveys, not more than 5 percent is authorized for administrative costs associated with contract management.