



15-068200
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

FEB - 3 2019

Mr. Edward J. Saade
Chairman
Hydrographic Services Review Panel
Federal Advisory Committee
4410 Westheimer Road, No. 3202A
Houston, TX 77027

Dear Mr. Saade:

We want to thank you for providing the seven recommendations from the Hydrographic Services Review Panel's (HSRP) New Orleans public meeting; the two issue papers and recommendations on arctic and sea level rise; and your comments on the draft strategic plan from the Office of Coast Survey. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) truly values HSRP's strategic advice and commitment to improve its navigation services portfolio.

Rear Admiral Gallaudet and Nicole LeBoeuf have expressed that the meeting in the Gulf and lower Mississippi River region with stakeholders and partners included thoughtful discussion. I also understand the local pilots and other marine transportation system stakeholders were able to highlight the importance of maritime commerce to the Blue Economy which, as you know, is an important component to NOAA. I was glad to hear the NOAA National Weather Service (NWS) speakers were able to underscore the complementary data requirements for safe navigation, marine weather, and flood mitigation, especially for the Mississippi River. I have shared your letter with our NWS forecasters requesting continued interaction with HSRP on riverine flooding forecasts. I look forward to NOAA continuing to engage and share updates with hydrographic stakeholders across the Mississippi River region and the Nation.

Your session on precision navigation also sounds compelling, especially as the pilot associations were able to communicate the operational requirements for tailored NOAA data to support safe navigation in our Nation's busiest ports. I can report that timely and economically significant work is underway on the next generation of integrated marine navigation services that will bring together private-sector innovation and NOAA data.

It is clear that users are requesting more from NOAA's navigation products and services, including the NOAA Physical Oceanographic Real Time System (PORTS[®]) program. I recognize the significant safety and economic benefits the PORTS[®] program provides to the maritime community with critical real-time decision support information on environmental conditions, as well as the need to support NOAA's ability to work with both existing and new PORTS[®] partners.



Mr. Edward J. Saade

Page 2

I would also like to thank you for your continued interest in the National Spatial Reference System, as well as the update to its framework of Continuously Operating Reference Stations. Discussions of autonomous navigation on land, sea, and air underscore how critical modernization of these systems is to provide accurate land elevations, timely positioning, and support to transportation systems.

I appreciate your encouragement on the 3D Nation Elevation Requirements and Benefits Study. My expectation is that this NOAA/U.S. Geological Survey project to document the business use benefits of elevation data and the value in seamless integration of topobathymetric data will help both agencies guide program implementation. The Arctic issue paper was a good reiteration of current challenges and needs. I note NOAA's ongoing partnership with the U.S. Coast Guard to expand the dissemination of NOAA environmental and safety information to vessels via automatic identification system transmitters, especially in the Arctic. NOAA will continue to provide updates to HSRP on both of these efforts.

The November 2019 White House Ocean Science and Technology Summit resulted in a number of threads to follow on shared interest in ocean technology and data acquisition improvements. NOAA will provide an update on the outcomes of the Summit at your next meeting. I look forward to the results of your April 2020 meeting in Hawaii, specifically the particular perspectives that will be provided by the Pacific Islands.

Once again, I appreciate HSRP and its continued service to NOAA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil A. Jacobs', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Neil A. Jacobs, Ph.D.

Assistant Secretary of Commerce for
Environmental Observation and Prediction
Performing the Duties of
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere