

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**BEFORE THE
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES CONSERVATION, WILDLIFE AND
OCEANS
HOUSE RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, for this opportunity to appear before you to testify on three bills to reauthorize many of the ocean and coastal programs of the Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA appreciates your continued support and interest in ensuring that it has the appropriate authorities and organization to address its ocean, coastal missions, as well as its atmospheric and climate prediction responsibilities. My testimony will address the three legislative proposals before the Subcommittee today: H.R. 958, the Hydrographic Services Amendments of 2003; H.R. 959, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Oceanography Amendments Act of 2003; and H.R. 984, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Act of 2003. NOAA is pleased to provide initial comments on these three bills, and to work with the committee as it deliberates.

The three bills would authorize the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and its line and program offices, the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (NOAA Research), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries), the Office Marine and Aircraft Operations (OMAO), and the National Ocean Service (NOS). The legislation would also authorize NOAA programs and laboratories including the Coastal Ocean Program (COP), Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL), Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory (PMEL), Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML), National Undersea Research Program (NURP), and Office of Ocean Exploration. The bills also authorize NOAA Research to conduct research and monitoring in support of coastal observations and hydrographic related services. They also authorize the Science Advisory Board (SAB) and the Fleet Replacement and Modernization program.

A number of provisions in these bills are currently under review with the Administration, we will work with the committee, and inform them as positions are developed. For example, the Administration is considering alternative options to the volunteer authority in section 102 of H.R. 958, the Hydrographic Services Amendments.

NOAA is concerned that the language in Sections 3, 6, 7, and 8 of H.R. 984, The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Act of 2003, may unnecessarily restrict the Secretary's ability to manage the agency, and we would be happy to work with the committee to modify this language. We would also like to work with you regarding some technical changes to the provision dealing with the Director of Marine and Aviation Operations and the Commissioned Officer Corps.

H.R. 984, THE "NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION ACT OF 2003"

NOAA appreciates this opportunity to provide initial comments on this proposed legislation. I commend the Subcommittee for recognizing the need to facilitate the integration of ongoing research and management programs in order to meet diverse national needs and requirements. NOAA has a proud past and a promising future. I look forward to working with the Subcommittee as this bill makes its way through the legislative process. Before I address specific sections of the legislation at hand, I would like to spend a few moments discussing the NOAA Program Review Team report which gathered suggestions on organizational, resource, and business process changes for building a better NOAA to serve the American people.

Upon coming to NOAA, I called for a bottom-up, fundamental review that would examine the Agency's strengths and opportunities for improvement. On February 1, 2002, I asked all NOAA employees to respond to three questions about NOAA and the way we were doing business at that time. These three questions were:

- 1) Is the NOAA organization aligned with its current missions and future missions? If not, what are your recommendations for change, near-term and/or long-term?
- 2) Are there significant imbalances in resources versus requirements? If so, what are your recommendations for change, near-term and/or long-term?
- 3) Are we being as efficient as possible in meeting our current and future mission tasking? If not, what are your recommendations for change near-term and/or long-term?

The Program Review Team (PRT), comprised of 16 representatives of NOAA line and staff offices, deliberated for three months, and made recommendations to address many of the responses. In June 2002, under my signature, NOAA issued 68 recommendations from the Program Review Team process.

There are many other PRT management improvements that are crucial to improve the way we do business at NOAA. I look forward to working the Committee to coordinate these activities with your efforts. These include:

- Creation of the Office of Program Planning and Integration, which would be comprised of 10 permanent positions reprogrammed from the Under Secretary and Associate Offices and 13 staff detailed from NOAA's line offices. The creation of this office will result in enhanced research and planning functions, reduce duplication of effort, provide better alignment of missions, and fill voids in NOAA's corporate capabilities.
- Realignment of 66 permanent positions within the Under Secretary and Associate Offices to consolidate NOAA education efforts under the Office of Education and Sustainable Development, and realign interagency and intergovernmental coordination under the Office of Public, Constituent and Intergovernmental Affairs.
- Separating as much as possible regulatory and research functions within the Line Offices. This activity also entails creating a science position within top NOAA Fisheries management, and shifting the reporting of regional Science Center Directors from the Regional Administrators to top management within NOAA Fisheries.
- Developing a formal corporate decision making process by establishing two corporate boards: the NOAA Executive Council (NEC) to review NOAA-wide policy and management issues and NOAA Executive Panel (NEP) to manage NOAA operations and make policy recommendations to the NEC.
- Establishing a sequential planning, programming and budgeting process. A new requirements review of NOAA activities will be part of the programming process.
- Managing cross-cutting programs, such as climate and corals, through a matrix approach that provides managers dual reporting authority and budget authority.
- Instituting needed administrative service improvements. These would, for example, significantly reduce the time needed to award grants to your constituents and would put funding increases into the hands of NOAA program managers within 20 business days after an appropriations bill is signed by the President. We are also working to improve facilities maintenance and safety.
- Establishing a working group to develop an Observing System Architecture.

Implementation of this effort will begin to position NOAA to meet the critical resource and environmental challenges that the Nation will face in the 21st century. It is intended to unlock the full potential of this talented organization by providing an improved management structure and new strategic management processes. These actions will improve integration across our line

offices, increase efficiency, provide more management visibility, promote increased responsiveness to customer needs, and be totally supportive of the President's Management Initiatives. By infusing a set of corporate business practices in the near-term and focusing and strengthening capabilities in the long term, NOAA will improve mission delivery and develop a "corporate NOAA" identity.

Section 10. Science Advisory Board

Sec. 10 of H.R. 984 authorizes the Science Advisory Board (SAB) and its activities. The language would authorize the SAB and its operation within NOAA to provide advice to the agency on strategies for research, education, and the application of science to resource management and environmental assessment and prediction. NOAA is pleased to see Congress' recognition of the importance of the SAB. The Secretary of Commerce initially approved the establishment of the SAB on August 15, 1997. The Board was initially chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App. 2) on September 25, 1997, with the General Services Administration's concurrence. Since its inception, the SAB has operated under a charter that is consistent with that proposed in this legislation.

We requests two modifications to Section 10. First, in Section 10 (c) (1), strike "appointed by the Under Secretary" and insert "appointed by the Secretary." Second, in Section 10 (c) (3) (A), strike "and shall serve at the discretion of the Under Secretary" and insert in lieu thereof, "and shall serve at the discretion of the Secretary." With these changes, the Secretary of Commerce will appoint the members of the SAB, SAB members will serve at the discretion of the Secretary, and the Secretary may reappoint SAB members, or not, to additional terms on the SAB. We believe these changes provide the Secretary the appropriate flexibility to ensure that the SAB is effective in its role of advising the Under Secretary on strategies for research, education, and application of science to resource management and environmental assessment and prediction. Also, we believe that the issue of term limits for board members would be better addressed through the charter for the particular board, rather than through legislation.

Section 11. General Authorities, Grants, Contracts and Cooperative Agreements

NOAA requests that H.R. 984 be amended to include alternative language authorizing the Joint and Cooperative Institutes similar to that included in fiscal year 2003 appropriations approved by Congress, as follows:

"Provided further, That the Secretary of Commerce may hereafter enter into cooperative agreements with Joint and Cooperative Institutes as designated by the Secretary to use the personnel, services, or facilities of such organizations for research, education, training, and outreach."

As currently drafted, the proposed language may unduly restrict NOAA's ability to pursue additional needed research in other fields with the Joint and Cooperative Institutes in the future.

The suggested language allows for greater flexibility that could enhance NOAA's ability to fulfill its mission.

This section allows NOAA to continue to collaborate with Joint and Cooperative Institutes across the country on long-term research programs. Each of these Joint and Cooperative Institutes are formal, collaborative long-term research partnerships established under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Agreement (MOA) between NOAA, through the Office of the Under Secretary of Oceans and Atmosphere, and participating universities and non-profit research institutions with programs dedicated to oceanographic and/or atmospheric research, education and outreach. By design, most of the Institutes are geographically co-located with one or more NOAA facilities to promote scientific exchange and collaboration. The Joint and Cooperative Institutes bring together the resources of a research-oriented University or institution and NOAA in order to develop and maintain a center of excellence in research relevant to understanding the Earth's oceans, the Great Lakes, inland waters, Arctic regions, solar terrestrial environment, intermountain west, and the atmosphere.

In addition to authorization for NOAA to enter into agreements with Joint and Cooperative Institutes, I would like to call the committee's attention to NOAA's concerns regarding interagency financing issues for Coastal America and the National Oceanographic Partnership Program (NOPP). An annual appropriations provision that applies to all Federal Agencies restricts these organizations' abilities to obtain contributions from partner agencies for their operations. These two programs provide models for interagency collaboration on environmental and oceanographic projects. NOAA encourages the committee to consider the broader need for NOAA-wide authorities to facilitate the success of such collaborative efforts and initiatives. I believe that clarifying and updating NOAA's authority to enter into cooperative agreements, contracts, grants, resource-sharing agreements, and joint and cooperative institutes with a single NOAA-wide authority for these purposes will enable NOAA work efficiently with public and private partners, and to keep pace with its evolving responsibilities in this area.

NOAA would prefer this language: "(a) In carrying out the programs and activities authorized for the Administration, the Secretary may enter into grants, contracts, or cooperative agreements with Federal agencies, States, local governments, regional agencies, interstate agencies, Federally-recognized Indian Tribes, commercial organizations, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, or other persons. In addition, to facilitate the implementation of programs and activities authorized for the Administration, the Secretary may apply for, accept, and use grants or funds from other Federal agencies, States, local governments, regional agencies, interstate agencies, or other persons."

The Commissioned Corps of NOAA is one of the seven uniformed services. It is important that legislation relating to NOAA preserve explicitly the special functions of the Commissioned Corps, including its national emergency functions under Sections 251 and 253 of the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps Act of 2002. Accordingly, we request addition of the following subsection to Section 11, "(d) COMMISSIONED CORPS. – Nothing in this Act shall be

construed to supersede or otherwise affect the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Act of 2002 (Title II of Public Law 102-372).”

Section 12. Program Support

NOAA generally supports the authorized amounts to be appropriated for Corporate Services under Section 12 (a). These amounts would be sufficient to provide corporate services, including management, administrative support, and policy development. The proposed section authorizing appropriations for Corporate Services for each of the fiscal years 2004-2008 should, however, be consistent with the President’s FY 2004-FY 2008 budget requests.

NOAA also supports Section 12 (c) of the proposed legislation, which authorizes appropriations to enable NOAA to carry out activities related to maintenance, repair, safety, and project planning and execution of facilities. Addressing the backlog of facilities maintenance and repair is critical to NOAA’s mission. Since coming to NOAA, I have focused on our greatest asset, our people. Efficient mission delivery is highly dependent on a team of skilled and motivated NOAA employees. In order to attract and retain a competent and productive workforce, NOAA must maintain state-of-the-art facilities to which this workforce reports each and every day.

Section 13. NOAA Fleet and Modernization

NOAA’s fleet of ships and aircraft support a wide range of ocean and atmospheric missions, including oceanographic and fisheries research, nautical charting, habitat mapping and characterization, ocean exploration, climate studies, hurricane research and reconnaissance, and air chemistry studies. Most recently, the NOAA fleet have been supporting the Nation’s homeland security efforts. NOAA’s hydrographic survey ships also have been assisting the U.S. Navy with 100-percent bottom coverage route surveys in strategic ports around the Nation.

In FY 2004, assuming the level of funding specified in the President’s FY 2004 request, the NOAA fleet will comprise 16 ships (including the reactivation of the FAIRWEATHER) and 13 aircraft. Over 50 percent of NOAA’s funding for ship support will be met through outsourcing and over 40 percent of aircraft funding will go toward aircraft charters. In-house data collection will be supported by 4050 Operating Days on NOAA vessels and 3815 flight hours on NOAA aircraft. As program requirements for ship and aircraft support increase at NOAA, and the age of the fleet increases, it is critical that NOAA document the appropriate mix of outsourcing and in-house data collection and generate a schedule for the modernization and replacement of NOAA platforms. Last fall, I directed NOAA Marine and Aviation Operations to prepare 10-year modernization plans for NOAA ships and aircraft. The plans document program requirements; new and emerging mission areas, such as homeland security; outsourcing efforts; and proposes a schedule for the modernization and replacement of the NOAA fleet. The ship and aircraft plans are currently in review at NOAA.

Section 13 (b). Fleet Modernization Plan

NOAA plans to continue the fleet planning and modernization effort described above, and match it to the budget cycle. As such, it is our intention to develop a 5 year plan that is updated annually. This would allow NOAA to evaluate annual progress to the current status of the fleet modernization plan.

H.R. 959, THE “NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC OCEANOGRAPHY AMENDMENTS ACT OF 2003”

NOAA conducts a wide array of research aimed at meeting its missions of protecting, restoring, and managing the use of coastal and ocean resources through ecosystem management approaches; understanding climate variability and change to enhance society’s ability to plan and respond; serving society’s needs for weather and water information; and supporting the Nation’s commerce with information for safe and efficient transportation. Our people are working worldwide using some of the oldest methods, as well as the most modern, to enhance and further our understanding of our oceans and coasts. Using tools in space, on the surface of the sea, and on the very depths of the ocean bottom, NOAA science has provided valuable information for use by decision-makers and the general public. NOAA is pleased to see Congress’ interest and support of our ocean and coastal programs over the years and in the bills before us, and we look forward to working with you further to ensure that the full breadth of our oceanographic research programs are able to continue their critical work. These funds will allow NOAA to continue and enhance cooperative research on ocean and coastal issues with other Federal partners.

NOAA’s ocean and coastal research efforts are wide-ranging and have many significant impacts. Just a few examples include:

- The Coastal Ocean Program (COP) is an important competitive, peer-reviewed research program focused on long-term, large-scale ecosystem studies necessary to develop alternative strategies for improving the condition of the coastal ocean. Major research areas of this program include: coastal fisheries ecosystems, cumulative coastal impacts, and harmful algal blooms/eutrophication.
- The Center for Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research (CCEHBR) at Charleston, South Carolina, is responsible for research that leads to the development and improvement in the ecological indicators from the molecular to the ecosystem level. Major research areas include: marine toxins and harmful algal blooms; environmental quality and coastal ecosystem health; land use and presence of chemical contaminants in the marine environment; and genetic characterization of fish and shellfish.
- The Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program has had several accomplishments in recent years for hazard assessment, warning, and mitigation. For example, tsunami inundation

maps were completed for 25 additional communities in Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington in FY02. Evacuation maps are being standardized so that colors and legends are consistent from state to state for evacuation brochures. The array of six deep ocean tsunami detectors was maintained in FY 2002 with 98 percent data return using the NOAA research vessel *Kai'imoana*. A false alarm was avoided on January 21, 2003 when a large earthquake on the Mexico coastline produced a 1.2 meter tsunami in Manzanillo Bay. A tsunami forecast model is now in place to begin producing tsunami wave forecasts for selective cities. Investments in tsunami evacuation maps and state level mitigation plans have raised the awareness of coastal residents and local decision makers for tsunami hazards and appropriate response.

- Studies are conducted at the Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory (PMEL) to improve our understanding of the complex physical and geochemical processes operating in the world oceans, to define the forcing functions and the processes driving ocean circulation and the global climate system, and to improve environmental forecasting capabilities and other supporting services for marine commerce and fisheries.
- The Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory (AOML) has addressed such critical issues as rapid hurricane intensification and helped improve the accuracy of hurricane forecasts, helping to save lives along the U.S. coastline by contributing significantly to better warnings and emergency management.

NOAA LABORATORIES

Sec. 5. Oceanography Programs

NOAA is pleased to see that H.R. 959 includes specific authorization for facilities such as NOAA's Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory (GLERL), and general authorization for activities related to coastal environmental health and biomolecular research. Among these activities is research such as that conducted at the Center for Environmental Health and Biomolecular Research (CCEHBR), which was not specifically authorized in this legislation. We appreciate the interest in NOAA's laboratories. NOAA also requests that Congress provide language allowing the agency flexibility to create new laboratories and programs, or reassign tasks as needed, to better meet its mission as new needs may arise. For example, the NOAA

Environmental Technology Laboratory conducts research into remote sensing technologies for studying fisheries, and is not mentioned in the legislation.

NOAA is concerned about the authorization of appropriations in Sec. 208(2) that provides \$12 million for ocean and coastal research activities of laboratories and joint institutes, other than activities related to GLERL, for fiscal years 2004 through 2008. The President's Fiscal Year 2004 request for these activities among AOML, PMEL, and the Environmental Technology

Laboratory (ETL) is \$11.716 million. Holding the authorization steady at \$12 million would curtail the activities specified by this section in coming years due to inflationary costs alone. The allowance for GLERL in the authorization of \$10 million for fiscal years 2004 through 2008 may also not allow for necessary inflationary increases. NOAA requests that H.R. 959 be amended to provide authorization levels consistent with the President's Budget.

In FY 2002 appropriations, Congress directed NOAA to fund seven university-based programs engaged in the collection and management of coastal ocean data and in the development and verification of sensor technologies. Collectively referred to as the Coastal Observation Technology System, these awards totaled almost \$13 M. In addition, NOAA received \$475K for program development under the title of Coastal Observation Technology System. Two of the awards were administered by NOAA Research and five were administered by NOS. NOAA worked with these partners to ensure that system development and data management protocols would be compatible with the national Integrated Ocean Observing System plan under development at the Ocean.US office (under the guidance of the National Ocean Research Leadership Council).

In the FY 2003 appropriations, Congress has directed NOAA to continue supporting six of the projects funded in FY 2002 plus two new related projects, totaling \$14.26 M (all in the NOS budget in FY03). NOAA receives \$1.69 M for program development under the Coastal Observation Technology title.

It is important to note that elements across NOAA are working with various partners on issues related to collecting, processing, and applying observations of the coastal environment. The Coastal Observation Technology System is but one component of this effort. While working with these programs, NOAA has also assisted Ocean.US in the development of a plan for a national coastal ocean observing system.

RESEARCH PROGRAMS

Sec. 4. Ocean Exploration Program

NOAA would like to suggest one change to the authorities of the Ocean Exploration Program (OE) highlighted in the new Sec. 206(c)(3). The language suggests that OE should conduct public education and outreach activities "in conjunction" with the National Sea Grant College Program (Sea Grant) and the National Science Foundation Centers for Ocean Science Education Excellence (COSEE). NOAA would prefer that the language specify "cooperation" rather than "conjunction." This would allow OE to continue to sponsor and conduct public education and outreach activities that are complementary to Sea Grant and COSEE's work without having to conduct each activity with them each time, which might not be the most efficient use of available resources.

NOAA also recommends amending Sec. 206(c)(4) by adding the word “services” to the list of donations that OE can accept. This would allow for individuals with particular expertise in NOAA’s issues to contribute their knowledge to assisting our mission.

Ocean Observations

H.R. 959 also authorizes appropriations for other exciting ocean and coastal research programs in NOAA. ARGO floats are authorized for \$9M from fiscal years 2004 through 2008. ARGO is part of a larger observational network dedicated to describing, understanding, and predicting the earth's climate system. NOAA’s climate observation program is built on the recognition that national and international partnerships are essential to success. A global observing system by definition crosses international boundaries and the potential exists for both benefits and burdens to be shared by many nations. The climate observation program supports both ocean and atmospheric components, but the ocean has received the most attention to date because climate research has left ocean observing system legacies that must be transitioned to an operational framework. Today NOAA laboratories, university partners, and volunteer observing ships operate about 60 percent of the *in-situ* ocean observing system for climate.

NOAA conducts observations in the deep as well as coastal oceans using a variety of tools. While H.R. 959 discusses in the new Sec. 207 a Coastal Observation Technology System, the only open ocean observing system authorized by H.R. 959 appears to be ARGO. As part of the larger system needed to understand our climate and improve the management of our Nation’s coastal and ocean resources, ARGO relies on other critical components that may be distinct from technologies used in coastal ocean observing systems. NOAA requests that these components and efforts also be recognized and authorized as it continues implementing a global ocean observing system. Together, the coastal and deep ocean observing technologies paint a much stronger picture of our environment and its variability that will be of much greater value to decision-makers.

Arctic Research

H.R. 959 authorizes funding for Arctic research partnership programs. The Arctic Research Office (ARO) serves as a focal point for NOAA's research activities in the Arctic, Bering Sea, North Pacific and North Atlantic regions. The office manages the Arctic Research Initiative, the Study of Environmental Arctic Change Program (SEARCH), and other funds allocated to it, supporting both internal NOAA and extramural research. It represents NOAA on the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee, leads U.S. involvement in the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program, and provides a point of contact between NOAA and the Cooperative Institute for Arctic Research and the International Arctic Research Center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

NOAA is concerned that authorized appropriations in H.R. 959 do not meet the request currently in the fiscal year 2004 budget. As noted previously for our laboratories, the funding level of \$4

million authorized in the bill is just above the total requested levels for Arctic research programs and SEARCH. Fiscal year 2004 funding for SEARCH is actually at \$2.074 million, above the \$2 million level authorized by H.R. 959. We would request that the authorization levels be consistent with the President's Budget.

H.R. 958, THE "THE HYDROGRAPHIC SERVICES AMENDMENTS OF 2003"

I appreciate and thank the Chairman and members of the Subcommittee for their continued support for NOAA's hydrographic services, including your successful efforts in the last Congress to reauthorize these programs for five years. The efforts of this Subcommittee have been an essential reason for significant new investment in these programs. The base budget for these services has increased 80 percent in seven years from \$71 million in FY96 to \$128M in the President's FY04 request.

NOAA has used increased support to completely convert to a computer-based, digital system for maintaining our suite of 1,000 paper charts. This has allowed us to keep our chart suite updated on an almost daily basis. It also resulted in the availability of the raster digital chart, which is basically a digital version of the paper chart. NOAA has developed new ways of getting this updated information to mariners. For example, instead of buying a paper chart that gets more and more outdated every day it sits on a shelf, we have introduced "print-on-demand" whereby a chart is printed from our constantly updated database when it is ordered.

Of course, the advent of new technologies is allowing for development of a much more dynamic digital chart than a computerized rendition of the historic paper chart. The objective, as established by the International Maritime Organization, is for nations to provide a truly digital, vector chart based on internationally agreed upon standards. NOAA's IMO-compliant product is called the Electronic Navigational Chart or ENC. NOAA has prioritized development of these charts beginning with major ports and waterways. To date, about 240 have been produced and are being regularly updated and maintained. They are being provided at no cost to the public via the Internet. More than 430,000 have been downloaded since we first posted them on the Web in July of 2001.

NOAA has made similar progress in our efforts to reduce the backlog of survey requirements, implement real-time oceanographic systems, and improve the capability to utilize GPS through the National Spatial Reference System. Over this same period, we have increasingly relied on the private sector to achieve our program goals. For example, more than half of our funding for hydrographic surveys is dedicated to contracting.

Section 103(a) Quality Assurance Program

This section would essentially require NOAA to promote acceptance by other nations and international organizations private sector products certified by NOAA. As was noted in the

Administration's views letter of June 26, 2002, the foreign policy objectives of this section should be advisory and be included in the Committee Report on the bill.

Section 103(b) Implementation of Executive Order and OMB Circular

As was noted in the Administration's views letter of June 26, 2002, this section should be advisory and be included in the Committee report on the bill. The Department is aware of, and currently implementing, its Executive Branch policies on geospatial information.

Section 104 Plan Regarding Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing

As was noted in the Administration's views letter of June 26, 2002, this reporting requirement is unnecessary because NOAA is already planning to increase outsourcing for these services. Development of the plan has included consulting with relevant private sector organizations.

Section 105 Acquisition of Hydrographic Survey Vessel

Congress has already provided sufficient authority to acquire hydrographic vessels, including the authority to procure and lease hydrographic vessels under Section 303(b)(1) of the Hydrographic Services Improvement Act.

Section 106 Koss Cove

The NOAA family is very grateful for Section 106, which memorializes an Alaskan cove in honor of Able Bodied Seaman Eric Steiner Koss of the NOAA Vessel RAINIER, who died in the performance of a nautical charting mission off the coast of Alaska. As this cove appears to be in state waters, NOAA would be happy to work with the committee to ascertain that the State of Alaska has agreed to the name change.

Section 107 Depiction of Same Shorelines on Charts and Mapping Products

To reflect the merger of the Federal Emergency Management Agency into the Department of Homeland Security, in section 107 strike, "Federal Emergency Management Agency," and insert in lieu thereof, "Secretary of Homeland Security."

In conclusion, NOAA stands ready to work with the Subcommittee staff to make the necessary changes to the draft bills to reach our mutual goal of improving NOAA's service to the Nation. This concludes my testimony, and I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have.