

Committee on Resources

Subcommittee on Fisheries Conservation, Wildlife and Oceans

Statement

STATEMENT FOR THE RECORD

Before the

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FISHERIES CONSERVATION, WILDLIFE AND OCEANS

March 18, 1999

The twenty-seven undersigned organizations are writing to stress the importance of adequate funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) nautical charting and navigation services programs. An adequate level of funding for these programs is an essential component of the environmentally friendly, safe and efficient flow of trade. Additionally, the importance of the National Ocean Service's (NOS) navigation programs is evidenced by recent Congressional actions, including the enactment of the *Hydrographic Services Improvement Act* (P.L. 105-384).

We urge you to appropriate the following funding levels for NOAA's Navigation Services program for FY 2000: \$33 million for mapping and charting, \$33 million to conduct hydrographic surveys, and \$22.5 million for the Tides and Currents account. These budgetary levels reflect those recently passed by Congress in Public Law 105-384 (H.R. 3461), and these funding levels will eliminate the backlog of critical survey areas only in approximately twenty years rather than the 35 years currently proposed in the Administration's FY 2000 budget. We should not wait for the huge expense and environmental damage of a major maritime disaster to call attention to this issue.

These navigation services provided by NOAA are used by a diverse constituency, including fishermen, recreational and scientific interests, flood control and emergency preparedness groups, cruise vessels, ferries, and others, and are part of a national defense navigation system which operates efficiently to protect life and property.

The commercial shipping industry is investing in new technology systems that are likely to significantly improve both safety and efficiency, but their investment will not be fully realized unless the U.S. government fulfills its statutory and treaty responsibilities to provide accurate and up-to-date charts and tide and current predictions.

Investing in accurate charts and real-time water systems is consistent with the Administration's priorities, since it is an extremely cost-effective means for encouraging commerce, enhancing sustainable communities, maintaining safety for human lives, and avoiding oil spills.

If you have questions regarding these programs, please contact Kurt Nagle, President, American Association of Port Authorities, at (703) 684-5700.

American Association of Port Authorities
Agriculture Ocean Transport Coalition
American Maritime Congress
Coal Exporters Association of the United States
Council of European and Japanese National Shipowners
Associations (CENSA)
Crowley Maritime
Dominion Terminal Associates
Dredging Contractors of America
International Association of Independent Tanker Owners
(INTERTANKO)
International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)
Lake Carriers' Association
Louis Dreyfus Corp.
Maersk Inc.

Maritime Exchange for the Delaware River and
Bay
Maritime Institute for Research & Industrial
Development (MIRAID)
Matson Navigation Company
Mississippi Valley Coal Trade & Transport
Council
National Association of Maritime Organizations
National Industrial Transportation League
(NITL)
National Mining Association
Passenger Vessel Association
Ruhrkohle Trading Corp.
Saltchuk Resources, Inc.
Sea-Land Service, Inc.
Transportation Institute
U.S. Great Lakes Shipping Association
West Gulf Maritime Association

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