

**Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife and
Fisheries Legislative Hearing
1324 Longworth House Office Building
March 21, 2024
10:00AM**

- **H.R. 1395 (Rep. Fitzpatrick)**, "*Delaware River Basin Conservation Reauthorization Act of 2023*";
- **H.R. 5487 (Rep. Huffman)**, "*Help Our Kelp Act*";
- **H.R. 6814 (Rep. Graves of LA)**, "*Marine Fisheries Habitat Protection Act*"; and
- **H.R. 7020 (Rep. McClain)**, "*Great Lakes Mapping Act*"

Question from Rep. McClain

1. Mr. Porch, high resolution mapping of the Great Lakes is a big job that will cost a lot. How will NOAA perform this work in an efficient and affordable manner? Will NOAA use the private sector expertise in high-resolution mapping and the processing of bathymetric data to the maximum extent possible?

Answer:

NOAA's Office of Coast Survey is the recognized expert in high resolution seafloor mapping, with more than 200 years of surveying for safe navigation and coastal resilience. NOAA utilizes its small fleet of hydrographic vessels to maintain expertise and acquire hydrographic data, and also relies heavily on private sector contractors to acquire these critical datasets. In addition to planning, monitoring, and quality assuring both NOAA and private sector sources of bathymetric data, Coast Survey also works with international hydrographic offices to maintain highly accurate standards for mapping used by federal and state agencies, academia and the private sector. These factors ensure that Coast Survey delivers the best data to the taxpayer in the most efficient means possible. NOAA also welcomes contributions of existing data from external stakeholders to help fill in gaps.

In FY2024, the Office of Coast Survey has [four bathymetric mapping projects planned](#) in the Great Lakes: Approaches to Chicago, eastern Lake Ontario, Duluth and Two Harbors, and Approaches to Fairport Harbor. These data will update nautical charting products for safety of navigation, support Lakebed 2030 goals to map the Great Lakes completely by 2030, and other major efforts like the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative habitat mapping program.