

**House Natural Resources - Water, Wildlife and Fisheries Subcommittee
May 16, 2024 Oversight Hearing: *President's FY25 Budget Proposal for NOAA*
Questions for the Record Submitted to the Honorable Dr. Richard Spinrad**

Questions from Rep. D'Esposito

- 1. Mr. Spinrad, could you briefly explain NOAA's current efforts regarding surveying and mapping of coastal and federal waterways?**

NOAA Response:

The Coast and Geodetic Survey Act of 1947 authorizes NOAA to conduct hydrographic surveys and create nautical charting products. During the 2024 field season, NOAA's fleet of ocean mapping ships, NOAA's navigation response teams, and certified hydrographic survey contractors will survey U.S. coastal waters and beyond. Surveying and mapping projects in 2024 are concentrated in five regions: Alaska (one project), the Great Lakes (four projects), the Atlantic Coast (eighteen projects), the Pacific Coast (four projects), and the Gulf of Mexico (seven projects). These projects range in scale depending on needs after considering factors such as: requests from partners, age of previous surveys, and the changeability of the seafloor. Planned survey work can be found at the [FY 2024 NOAA Hydrographic Survey Projects Story Map](#).

- 2. Is there a need for NOAA to work with the private sector to deploy advanced technologies and more effectively conduct these activities?**

NOAA Response:

NOAA has been working with the private sector to develop and operationalize advanced technologies to more effectively conduct these activities for more than 20 years through partnerships like that with the University of New Hampshire's Joint Hydrographic Center.

- 3. Within NOAA's Budget Estimates report for FY25 and its justification of program and performance it states, "Complete and up-to-date hydrographic data is central to developing accurate nautical charts and ensuring the safety of life at sea, and promoting efficient maritime commerce." Do you believe this information is readily available for commercial anglers, recreational fishers, boaters, maritime vessels, and others who enjoy our coastal waters?**

NOAA Response:

NOAA's suite of more than 1,200 electronic navigational charts is available to all mariners including commercial anglers, recreational fishers, and boaters, via our website; <https://charts.noaa.gov/InteractiveCatalog/nrnc.shtml#mapTabs-2>. NOAA continues to expand accessibility to nautical data by rescheming the current suite to 1,650 new electronic navigational chart cells over the next two years, at FY 2025 President's Budget funding levels.

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- 4. My colleague Representative Mike Levin and I introduced the MAPOceans Act, which would provide for the standardization, publication, and accessibility of data for Federal waterway regulations and fishing restrictions along our coasts. This bill would require the Secretary of Commerce and relevant agencies, such as NOAA to partner with non-federal and third-party providers, including the private sector to carry out this act. Do you agree that standardizing such information and making it publicly accessible would be beneficial for coastal economies and the multiple users of our coastal and federal waterways?**

NOAA Response:

Recreational saltwater fishing and boating are traditional American activities that are integral to the culture and economies of coastal communities across the nation. These time-honored activities allow millions of people access to America's great outdoors each year, while generating billions of dollars in economic value.

Standardizing digital geospatial Federal fishing regulations in partnership with other Federal agencies and stakeholders, and making these data public, is directly aligned with NOAA's goal of promoting inclusive public access to sustainable and abundant recreational fishing opportunities.

We agree that providing this information will be a benefit to coastal economies and be appreciated by the recreational fishing and boating communities.