



April 12, 2005

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science,
and Transportation
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-6125

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter provides you with the Department of Commerce's views on S. 364, the "Ocean and Coastal Mapping Integration Act." In general, the Department supports the purposes of this legislation to recognize the need for improved coordination among agencies as new technologies, formats, and capabilities replace historic cartographic methods.

The Department appreciates the efforts of the Committee to support and promote the mapping activities and programs of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Department and the Bush Administration as a whole strongly support enhanced coordination and collaboration among Federal, State, Tribal and local governments and non-governmental entities regarding mapping activities.

However, the Department requests that the legislation be consistent with Executive Order 13366 and the U.S. Ocean Action Plan, which were published in December 2004 in response to the report of the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy. As outlined on page 15 of the U.S. Ocean Action Plan, we believe that the most effective way to advance improved coastal and ocean mapping is through the coordination of existing programs and not through the creation of a potentially unnecessarily duplicative program. The Department and the Administration would welcome the opportunity to brief the Committee on the specific elements of the mapping activities and other elements of the U.S. Ocean Action Plan.

In addition, the Department opposes directing a specific amount of appropriations for Joint Ocean and Coastal Mapping Centers and requests that all funding levels authorized under this bill be consistent with the President's FY 2006 Budget Request. The Department appreciates the opportunity to present views on S. 364. We look forward to working with you as this bill moves through the legislative process.

The Office of Management and Budget has advised that there is no objection to the transmittal of these views from the standpoint of the Administration's program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane T. Dana". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Jane T. Dana
Acting General Counsel

cc: The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, Co-Chairman,
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

The Honorable Olympia Snowe, Chair,
Subcommittee on Fisheries and the Coast Guard

The Honorable Maria Cantwell, Ranking Member,
Subcommittee on Fisheries and the Coast Guard

The Honorable John Sununu, Chairman,
National Ocean Policy Study

The Honorable Barbara Boxer, Ranking Member,
National Ocean Policy Study