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Written Statement before the US Commission on Ocean Policy
Panel on Partnerships
January 16, 2001

The coastal environment is highly valued for the services it provides, including beaches for recreation, habitat for fish and wildlife, and waterfronts to support economic activities. Yet, these services are vulnerable to the effects of coastal storms and other natural hazards, nonpoint source pollution, oil and chemical spills, and other threats. Finding a balance between environmental protection and economic prosperity is a complex challenge. For example, maritime commerce is vital to the US economy, contributing over \$742 billion annually in revenue and 13 million jobs. Yet, there are inherent risks to transporting cargo on the high seas. Each year, over 3,500 ships are involved in accidents on the Nation's waterways. Populations and economic activity also continue to grow on the coast. Forty percent of the Nation's economic activity (GDP) occurs in the coastal zone and forty percent of commercial and residential development starts on the coast. But, the aesthetic and recreational values that make the coast attractive are often threatened by the continued migration of people to the shore.

The world's coasts are where everything comes together – air, water, and land all meet. No one discipline; no one group can understand what is happening here without working with others. In addition, it is where humans come together – we live, work and play along our coasts more than any place else. Governing here for the benefit of all must be done at all levels and with the involvement of an incredibly diverse group of interests. It is imperative for NOAA or anyone else trying to understand what is happening in our coasts to partner with other scientists, other levels of government, other parts of the Federal government, and even other countries to effectively accomplish our goals.

As the Nation's principal advocate for coastal and ocean stewardship, the NOAA Ocean Service (NOS) works to achieve a balance between environmental protection and economic prosperity. NOS is one of five line offices within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which also includes the National Marine Fisheries Service, the National Weather Service, the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service and the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research. NOS works to achieve this balance by:

- **Promoting Safe Navigation**, because accurate and timely navigation services are critical to safety, economic productivity and environmental protection;
- **Supporting Coastal Communities**, because their long-term viability depends on achieving a balance between economic development and environmental protection;
- **Sustaining Coastal Habitats**, because the coast is highly valued for the services it provides, but is vulnerable to degradation; and
- **Mitigating Coastal Hazards**, because communities must reduce their vulnerability and respond immediately when disasters strike.

NOS and our partners provide the scientific, technical and management expertise necessary to address the complex challenges of our coastal regions.

While NOS expertise is focused on the Nation's coasts, our effectiveness is amplified through collaboration with partners. Partnerships at all levels are essential to addressing the complexity of the coasts. Fulfilling both the NOAA and NOS mission and goals are dependent on the ability to develop public-private, interagency, and international partnerships for the expansion, transfer, and archiving of environmental knowledge and technologies. The NOS Strategic Plan recognizes that stewardship of coastal resources is a shared responsibility. Our mission statement begins by stating that a key role for NOS is to be an advocate for coastal stewardship through *partnerships at all levels*. As a science and information agency, our primary responsibility is to ensure our partners have the technological ability and information necessary for them to responsibly conserve, protect and develop coastal resources for this and future generations. Our Strategic Plan outlines our mission, but it is also a blueprint for how we will achieve it. Partnerships are the key element in achieving our goals.

Elements of Successful Partnerships

The term “partnership” is used often in Washington these days to describe just about every relationship agencies have outside their organizations. The development of successful and long-term partnerships, however, involves much more than just labeling a relationship as a partnership.

An important aspect in developing partnerships is determining what the shared objectives are. These can include everything from sharing expertise and resources, leveraging existing, but limited resources, creating an educated constituency, or providing knowledge or access to data. Beneficiaries of a partnership should not be the customers but actually one of the partners. Often it is these beneficiaries who are the driving force to ensuring the success of the partnership.

As recently addressed during the NOAA and Academia Partnership Building Conference in November 2001, features of successful partnerships include:

- Early, joint planning of programs
- Multi-year funding at a specified ratio
- Commitment to stable multi-year funding
- Commitment to maintaining agreed upon funding ratios
- Explicit expected outcomes, roles and responsibilities for each party
- Each partner treats the others as important constituencies
- Partners leverage multiple funding sources
- Joint pursuit of funding and political and constituent support
- Responsible party in each organization for the maintenance of the partnership
- Open access to relevant data and information
- Respective constituents are well organized

There are a number of additional aspects of partnerships that help to ensure their success. Partnerships should be formed at the lowest organizational level as possible: the level that

the work is actually being done at. While management needs to support and be involved in the partnership, the front line employees should be empowered to carry through the necessary activities of the partnership. In other words, partnerships should help to eliminate some of the bureaucratic barriers that normally exist between groups rather than add to them. Additionally, the partnership should allow for enough flexibility to address unforeseen challenges and opportunities.

The reason for the partnership – the why – is as important as the way that it is carried out – the how. The first step of developing the common goals and objectives through the planning process is critical. What follows are examples of partnerships at different levels that have been successful in helping NOAA or our partners achieve our missions and goals in our Nation’s coasts.

State, Local and Private Sector Partnerships in the Southeast

NOS is undertaking several partnerships with state and local governments and public and private organizations in the southeast region. Through these efforts, NOS and its partners build upon each other’s strengths and capabilities. Examples of such partnerships include:

- The ***Coastal Zone Management Program*** is a unique federal-state partnership authorized under the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) to help states manage their coastal resources and uses. Through the Coastal Zone Management Program, NOS provides grants, technical support, and expertise to states and territories that voluntarily develop and implement federally approved coastal zone management plans. The greatest impact of the CZMA has been to spur the establishment and continued improvement of 33 state coastal management programs and 25 National Estuarine Research Reserves. These programs have created innumerable partnerships at all levels in the pursuit of effective coastal management. An example is the Florida Coastal Management Program’s Blueways Project, which is a coastal planning decision support tool. The Blueways Project is an effort to create a GIS based database and management support system that can be used to identify “hot spots” of ecological value, management and human use so that government may identify those areas most in need of new management approaches.
- The ***Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials*** (NEMO) program is a partnership that aims to educate local land use officials by addressing the relationship of land use to natural resource protection. Developed by the University of Connecticut, NEMO has gained the support and interest of a number other agencies and municipalities including the NOAA’s Sea Grant and Coastal Management Programs. NOS is providing additional resources to NEMO this year to support new and enhanced efforts to address polluted runoff in our coasts areas. Interest in NEMO in coastal states is particularly strong; of the 23 funded programs, 19 are in coastal states. For example, South Carolina has been using NEMO to improve the ability of local decision makers to plan for and manage coastal development.

- The Navy, the Mariner’s Museum in Newport News, Virginia, NOS and others are undertaking a partnership to raise and preserve sections of the *USS Monitor*, a US Navy warship sunk off the coast of North Carolina during the Civil War. The *USS Monitor* has been called the Navy’s first modern warship and her wreck site became the first National Marine Sanctuary, established in 1975.
- Regional agencies are also partnering with NOS to enhance and expand the *Physical Oceanographic Real-Time System* (PORTS) in eight major US ports. PORTS delivers real-time data (water levels, currents, winds, water temperature, and other data at various sites) to mariners and other users and can also support coastal zone management needs to avoid groundings and collisions. PORTS implementation is a cost sharing, partnering effort based on extensive collaboration between NOAA and maritime communities to identify and satisfy local needs in order to derive economic and environmental benefits. In the southeastern US, PORTS are in the Chesapeake Bay and Tampa Bay and are being developed for the Delaware River and Bay.
- In recent years, NOS developed outsourcing plans for our *navigation programs*. This past year, NOS contracted with the private sector to conduct more than \$20 million in hydrographic surveys, representing more than 60 percent of the agency’s annual budget for hydrographic data acquisition. NOS uses this data to update our nautical charts and develop other navigational products with various partners. In addition, NOS continues to strengthen our regional partnerships in our nautical charting program. The local southeast coordinator for our navigation programs is here in Charleston and his job is to bring these programs to the regional and local interests and to convey the needs of these partners to the national program.
- The *Hollings Marine Laboratory* (HML) is the result of a partnership among NOS, the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR), the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the University of Charleston and the Medical University of South Carolina. The HML partnership extends beyond those institutions that have come together to build it to include a broad, multidisciplinary team of scientists dedicated to environmental research. To develop a truly interdisciplinary atmosphere, traditional institutional barriers will be removed as team members pool research assets (personnel, facilities, resources) and tackle common problems. Interdisciplinary teaching is another important component of the HML. While much of the hands on experience and training will occur in the HML’s cooperative research setting, academic degrees will be obtained through representative institutions. The HML was conceived in a joint position paper prepared by the NOAA, SC DNR, and South Carolina Sea Grant. Through the leadership of Drs. Bob Kifer (formerly of NOAA) and Paul Sandifer, Director of SCDNR, the vision for HML was expanded to include Fort Johnson facilities of the University of Charleston, the Medical University of South Carolina and the NIST. The HML will be a premier collaborative marine research center that applies new scientific techniques to fisheries and marine resources.

Key Partnerships Across NOAA and the Department of Commerce

NOS is also reaching out to other NOAA offices and Department of Commerce agencies to establish national and regionally based partnerships. Examples of these partnerships include the following:

- The *National Ocean Economics Project* (NOEP) is an effort to undertake the first major comprehensive, in-depth analysis of the size and composition of the US ocean economy over the past 30 years. NOAA and other Department of Commerce agencies are collaborating with the project team, including three academic institutions, by providing financial support and access to demographic and economic data. Several coastal states are also interested in undertaking state-level projects and the state involvement will likely begin in Maryland along with several other states around the country.
- The *NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office* (NCBO) was established to provide a focus for NOAA's multiple capabilities and activities in the Chesapeake Bay and for coordinating the agency's effort with its Bay partners. NOAA is increasingly involved in: habitat restoration (including beneficial use of dredge materials), fisheries issues, around which the NCBO was initially focused, toxics characterization and monitoring, ecosystem studies, invasive species, air deposition, and education. Partnerships have been the hallmark of the Bay restoration effort and are the reason for the progress made to date.
- NOAA scientists at the NOS *Center for Coastal Fisheries and Habitat Research* in Beaufort, North Carolina, are collaborating with other regional scientists to understand the role of the Charleston Bump as essential spawning and nursery habitat. This collaboration included the American Fisheries Society to produce *Island in the Stream: Oceanography and Fisheries of the Charleston Bump*, the first comprehensive volume on the Charleston Bump and the fishery management issues associated with it.

Partnerships Across the Federal Government

NOS is involved in several partnerships across the federal government to address complex coastal and ocean stewardship issues. Examples of such federal government-wide partnerships include the following:

- A national effort is underway to ensure that America's *Marine Transportation System* (MTS) remains safe, efficient, and environmentally responsible while accommodating anticipated growth in waterborne commerce. The goal of the interagency MTS initiative is to make the US system the world's most technologically advanced, safe, and environmentally responsible for moving goods and people. This effort is led by the Coast Guard with the strong support of NOAA and the participation of more than a dozen agencies concerned with maritime commerce and safety.

- Collaborating with its federal partners and Ocean.US, NOS is contributing to the definition and development of a national 'backbone' and the relevant data management/delivery capabilities required for a nation, integrated ***coastal observing system***. NOS is also working on the integration of national and regional coastal ocean observing systems through the establishment of 'portals' and prototype projects in several regions. These efforts are being complemented by NOAA Research's work to integrate the ocean observing systems.

- ***Coastal mapping*** databases are expensive to acquire and, historically, have been produced for single mission objectives. Working with the National Academy of Science, NOAA and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) are funding a 'requirements' assessment that is just getting underway. In the meantime, NOS continues collaboration with USGS on the digitized integration of topographic and bathymetric data; first project in Tampa/St Petersburg working with both the public and private sectors, the second just getting underway in Louisiana. In another instance, NOAA Weather Service, USGS and NOS are working with the State of North Carolina on the Office of Management and Budget/Federal Emergency Management Agency pilot project, which is a collaboration to demonstrate a new approach towards the development of state coastal floodplain maps. And, we are continuing our strong collaboration with the Coast Guard on the production of electronic nautical charts.

- The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) leads an interagency effort to clean up and reuse the Nation's brownfields, and several NOAA offices partner with EPA to address ***coastal brownfields***. Brownfields cleanup and reuse in coastal communities present opportunities to revitalize urban waterfronts, enhance public access to the coast, and restore coastal resources. Cape Charles, Virginia has been one of the earliest success stories in this effort. Funding provided by the Virginia coastal program and other sources helped this community to develop a special area management plan for revitalizing its waterfront while protecting its resources and quality of life. The resulting Port of Cape Charles Sustainable Technologies Park, a zero-emissions, solar-powered industrial park that promotes resource efficiency and pollution prevention and solicits businesses with environmental and social integrity, has received funding and resources from other government agencies and private sector businesses.

Conclusion

NOS's role as the Nation's principal advocate for coastal and ocean stewardship will only be achieved through collaboration with partners at all levels. This is evident through the wide range of partnerships already underway to achieve NOS's goals. Most NOS programs have relied on partnerships from their inception and the result has been a unique ability to partner with state and local governments via the Coastal Zone Management Program, oil spill response agencies, local harbors and communities, and other state and local partners. The result of this experience is borne out in the Hollings Marine Laboratory – a living laboratory of cross-discipline and cross-jurisdiction example of coming together to address issues in our Nation's coast in a cooperate and efficient manner. NOS, NOAA and many of the Federal agencies with which we work

look to a future of increasing and strengthening these partnership to efficiently and effectively address the complex and important issues we are dealing with in our Nation's coasts. I strongly encourage the US Commission on Ocean Policy to consider the importance of partnerships as it develops its recommendations for a coordinated and comprehensive national ocean policy.