

Harbor Safety Committee

of the San Francisco Bay Region

*Mandated by the California Oil Spill
Prevention and Response Act of 1990*

March 17, 2008

The Honorable Diane Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Subject: Appropriations Bill for Commerce, Justice and Science: \$149 Million for NOAA Navigation Services

Dear Senator Feinstein:

On behalf of the Harbor Safety Committee of the San Francisco Bay Region, I am writing to support the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) request in FY 2009 for \$149M for its navigational services. Accurate, reliable, ready to use maps and charts plus tide and current information are essential for safe navigation in the San Francisco Bay Region. The Bay presents a number of hazards to navigation, such as strong tides and currents, and variable bottom depths, which confine large vessels to defined shipping lanes. Navigating the Bay becomes more complex during challenging winter and summer fogs – as evidenced by the recent Cosco Busan incident, which occurred during dense fog.

The Harbor Safety Committee was established by the California State Legislature over fifteen years ago to promote harbor safety by preventing maritime accidents. The twenty member committee is comprised of port authorities; cargo, tanker, tug, barge and ferry operators; labor; bar pilots; recreational boaters; environmental organizations; the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the Coast Guard Captain of the Port and the Corps of Engineers.

The Committee has consistently supported NOAA's timely updating of charts and NOAA's role in ensuring the accuracy of the Physical Ocean Real Time System (PORTS) in San Francisco. PORTS provides real-time information for tides, currents and winds in the Bay. NOAA also used PORTS data to track oil spills.

Information provided by NOAA is vitally important to maritime safety in the Bay Region. Maritime traffic is a mix of container ships, petroleum and chemical tankers, tugs and barges, commute and tourist ferries, fishing vessels and recreational boaters. Seven port authorities, almost twenty oil terminals, and a growing number of ferry terminals dot the region – all depend upon the accuracy of navigational information to move vessels safely and prevent accidents.

We urge your support for NOAA Navigation Services in the amount of \$149M.

Sincerely,

Joan Lundstrom, Chair
Harbor Safety Committee of the San Francisco Bay Region

Cc: San Francisco Harbor Safety Committee

Harbor Safety Committee c/o Marine Exchange of the San Francisco Bay Region
Fort Mason Center, Building B, Suite 325, San Francisco, CA 94123-1380
(415) 441-7988 – hsc@sfmtx.org