

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
U.S. COAST GUARD

STATEMENT OF

REAR ADMIRAL BOBBY F. HOLLINGSWORTH
CHIEF, OFFICE OF MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND SYSTEMS

BEFORE

THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND NAVIGATION

REGARDING

CONTRACTING OF NOAA CHART SERVICES

APRIL 5, 1984

MR. CHAIRMAN

I AM REAR ADMIRAL BOBBY F. HOLLINGSWORTH, CHIEF OF THE COAST GUARD'S OFFICE OF MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND SYSTEMS. MR. CHAIRMAN, I AM PLEASED TO BE HERE THIS AFTERNOON TO PROVIDE THE VIEWS OF THE COAST GUARD ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ACCURATE AND READILY AVAILABLE NAUTICAL CHARTS TO MAINTAIN THE SAFETY OF MARITIME TRANSPORTATION IN U.S. WATERS.

HIGH QUALITY NAUTICAL CHARTS ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO SAFE NAVIGATION, INDEED THE CHART ITSELF IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT NAVIGATIONAL AIDS AVAILABLE TO A MARINER. THE TRUTH OF THAT IS AXIOMATIC TO MARINERS EVERYWHERE, BUT CERTAINLY TO US IN THE COAST GUARD. IN MEETING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SAFETY OF LIFE AND PROPERTY AT SEA, FOR PROTECTING THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT, FOR THE SAFETY OF OUR PORTS AND FOR FACILITATING THE FLOW OF MARINE COMMERCE, WE ARE VITALLY AWARE OF HOW INDISPENSIBLE ARE ACCURATE, HIGH QUALITY, EASILY CORRECTED CHARTS. THAT U.S. CHARTS ARE THE BEST IN THE WORLD IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US, NOT ONLY IN MEETING THE RESPONSIBILITIES PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED, BUT IN THE SAFE NAVIGATION OF OUR OWN COAST GUARD SHIPS AND BOATS.

THE PORT AND TANKER SAFETY ACT OF 1978 STATES IN PART "...THE CONGRESS FINDS AND DECLARES...THAT NAVIGATION AND VESSEL SAFETY...ARE MATTERS OF MAJOR NATIONAL IMPORTANCE..." IN KEEPING WITH THIS MANDATE THE COAST GUARD REQUIRES ALL SHIPS ENTERING OUR TERRITORIAL WATERS TO HAVE ON BOARD A CURRENTLY CORRECTED U.S. CHART. CHARTS OF OTHER NATIONS ARE ACCEPTED IF

THEY ARE EQUIVALENT IN QUALITY AND CONTENT TO OURS. THIS MAKES THE U.S. CHART THE STANDARD BY WHICH ALL OTHERS ARE JUDGED.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA (SOLAS), TO WHICH THE U.S. IS SIGNATORY, REQUIRES ALL COMMERCIAL VESSELS TO CARRY UP TO DATE CHARTS. THE COAST GUARD HAS PROMULGATED REGULATIONS IN 33 CFR 164 TO ENSURE THAT VESSELS HAVE SUFFICIENT AND UP-TO-DATE CHARTS.

THE NAUTICAL CHART SUPPLIES THE MARINER WITH A VARIETY OF CRITICAL CORRECTED GRAPHIC AND PRINTED INFORMATION. THE NAUTICAL CHART HAS NO PARALLEL WITH MOST OTHER MAPS OR CHARTS THAT DEPICT HIGHWAYS OR GEOLOGICAL FEATURES. IF A MARINER USES A CHART THAT IS FAULTY, A SERIOUS ACCIDENT COULD RESULT. CONDITIONS MAY NOT PERMIT HIM TO SIMPLY STOP HIS VESSEL TO AVOID A GROUNDING OR COLLISION. AN EXAMPLE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCURATE SURVEYS AND CHARTING IS THE GROUNDING OF AN ESSO TANKER IN THE RED SEA IN MAY 1983 WHILE IN AN ESTABLISHED TRAFFIC SEPARATION LANE, THAT HAD NOT BEEN ACCURATELY SURVEYED PRIOR TO ADJUSTING THE SCHEME.

ENSURING THE ACCURACY OF A NAUTICAL CHART IS A PROCESS THAT CONTINUES FROM THE TIME A CHART IS INITIALLY PUBLISHED UNTIL IT IS SO SUBSTANTIALLY CHANGED THAT A NEW EDITION IS REQUIRED. AS SOURCE MATERIAL IS REVIEWED AND NEW DATA EVALUATED, EACH CHART MUST BE CORRECTED FROM INFORMATION FURNISHED NOAA. THE ACQUISITION OF THIS INFORMATION INVOLVES A COMPLEX COORDINATION BETWEEN THE COAST GUARD, NOAA, AND OUR RESPECTIVE FIELD UNITS.

THE COAST GUARD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR FURNISHING INFORMATION ON ESTABLISHMENT OR DISESTABLISHMENT OF AIDS AND OTHER ITEMS AFFECTING SAFETY OF NAVIGATION, WHILE NOAA INFORMATION RELATES TO HYDROGRAPHY AND CARTOGRAPHY. THE CORRECT POSITIONING OF OUR AIDS TO NAVIGATION IS DEPENDENT UPON HOW ACCURATELY THE NEARBY LANDMARKS AND HYDROGRAPHY ARE REFLECTED ON THE APPLICABLE NOAA CHART.

IT IS AN ADDITIONAL COAST GUARD RESPONSIBILITY TO PUBLISH THE INFORMATION DEVELOPED IN LOCAL NOTICES TO MARINERS. THESE ARE EITHER PRINTED WEEKLY OR BROADCAST BY RADIO IF THE INFORMATION IS URGENTLY NEEDED BY THE MARINER. UPON RECEIPT OF THESE NOTICES THE MARINER ENTERS THE NECESSARY CORRECTIONS FOR THE CHARTS HE IS USING OR EXPECTS TO USE. THE COAST GUARD HAS BEEN, AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE, A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR OF NAVIGATIONAL INFORMATION THAT IS USED IN PREPARING AND MAINTAINING CHARTS OF AREAS FOR WHICH THE UNITED STATES HAS RESPONSIBILITY.

I HOPE I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GIVE YOU SOME FEELING FOR WHY WE OF THE COAST GUARD HAVE A VITAL INTEREST IN CHARTS...WHY THERE IS A STRONG NEED FOR ALL SEGMENTS OF THE MARITIME COMMUNITY TO HAVE ACCURATE, HIGH QUALITY NAUTICAL CHARTS...WHY THEY ARE ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAIN THE SAFETY OF VESSELS NAVIGATING IN OUR WATERS...AND WHY THE SAFETY OF THOSE WATERS AND OUR PORTS DEPEND ON THEIR QUALITY AND READY AVAILABILITY. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS I SHALL BE HAPPY TO ANSWER THEM.