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## United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

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April 15, 2009

Captain Steven R. Barnum, NOAA  
Director, Office of Coast Survey  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
1315 East West Highway  
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Dear Captain Barnum:

As Chairwoman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies, I congratulate you on the commissioning of the *Bay Hydrographer II*, a new vessel that will continue NOAA's long tradition of charting the Chesapeake Bay's coastline and channels for safe navigation.

The Port of Baltimore depends on accurate charts to ensure maritime traffic flows freely, and to help keep the Bay safe from environmental disasters that could result from vessels striking uncharted hazards. This new vessel replaces one with a successful and unique career that included updating dozens of nautical charts, discovering lost historic shipwrecks, and testing advanced technologies.

Investing in advanced technology, like the *Bay Hydrographer II* and the sonar equipment it uses, is especially important for keeping America competitive in a global arena. Much of the charting equipment and software currently used within NOAA's hydrographic fleet was first tested and proven right here in the Bay using this vessel's predecessor. I'm proud to have such an advanced test platform in Maryland's backyard – keeping America safe, and keeping America innovative.

I wish the officers and crew who sail aboard her much success as they continue NOAA's charting operations in the Bay, creating an important new chapter for our Nation's Survey of the Coast.

Sincerely,



Barbara A. Mikulski  
United States Senator