

Jeffrey R. Stephan
PO Box 2917, Kodiak, AK 99615
tel: 907-486-4568; email: jstephan@ptialaska.net

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Mr. Jim Murray
Assistant Director
National Sea Grant College Program

Re: Data needs for 093007 Panel meeting agenda topic “Discussion of Trends & Implications: NSGCP Congressional Appropriations and the NSGCP Investment Portfolio (where do we go from here?)”

Dear Jim,

An informed examination of the agenda topic, “Discussion of Trends & Implications: NSGCP Congressional Appropriations and the NSGCP Investment Portfolio (where do we go from here?)” is largely dependent on support and data that can only be provided by the NSGO. The subject agenda topic addresses the two distinct but interrelated subtopics of (1) the Congressional Appropriation to the National Sea Grant College program (NSGCP), and (2) the NSGCP Investment Portfolio (i.e., NSGCP-wide and individual program-specific investments in Research, Extension, Education, Communications, Administration and National Strategic Investments). These two subtopics, while interrelated, are respectively distinct and separate; the respective data sets that support an informed examination of such two subtopics are significantly different.

You have previously seen my email of 081307 wherein I provided Nat with my suggestion for topics to be considered for the 092907 Panel meeting agenda (i.e., "From: Jeff Stephan <jstephan@ptialaska.net>; Date: Mon, 13 Aug 2007 01:28:00 -0800; To: Nat Robinson <ner@terra.com.net>, ...; Cc: ... <Jim.D.Murray@noaa.gov>, ...; Subject: Re: LAST REMINDER: Preparing for the Panel's Fall Semiannual Meeting -- September 29-30, 2007, San Diego, CA. Comments due by Monday, August 13"). Moreover, I understand that Nat has since provided you with a summary of some further clarifications that I subsequently provided to him in response to his request that I further define the scope and format of the subject two topics.

The subtopics of “Congressional Appropriations to the NSGCP”, and “NSGCP Investment Portfolio”, and the development of the data and information that is needed to support an examination of such, fits clearly with the “50,000 Foot View” concept that has been advanced and promoted by the NSGO as a manner by which the Panel may be of greater global assistance to the NSGCP. In my opinion, these two topics, together with an examination and analysis of associated data and information, should probably be a topic of routine Panel consideration.

I. NSGCP Congressional Appropriation

Thank you for sending me the .xls file titled <SEAallocationHIST98.xls>. The data that is contained in this .xls file is helpful, and provides a needed historical perspective. While the

historical data and data categories that are included in the <SEAallocationHIST98.xls> file are essential to any explanation or discussion of the NSGCP Congressional appropriation, they do not include much of the important recent history of NSGCP Congressional appropriations. That is, the three Excel worksheets that are contained in the <SEAallocationHIST98.xls> file address only data for the Fiscal Year sets of 1982-2002, 1993-2002, and 1982-1998, respectively.

I presume that the NSGO must routinely track, compile and maintain current (e.g., through FY 2008) and continuing data on an ongoing basis that may easily fit into the data sets and data categories that are presented in the <SEAallocationHIST98.xls> file. To the extent possible, it would be extremely helpful if the NSGO would please undertake to update the data sets that are presented in the <SEAallocationHIST98.xls> file to include information up to and including FY 2008. An informed collaboration of the NSGO and the Panel with respect to this agenda subtopic is really not possible or probable without the benefit of a current and complete comparative set of data; any attempt to provide the data sets that are indicated below would be extremely helpful.

I note that Dick West attached a graph (i.e., <SG graph.doc>) with his recent report titled “A Report to the National Sea Grant Review Panel [a FACA panel]” (July 6, 2007). This graph included data points for NSGCP and NOAA Congressional appropriations for FY 1996 through FY 2008. I presume that the data that is included in the <SG graph.doc> graph may have been provided to Dick by the NSGO. If the source of such data was not the NSGO, I suggest that the NSGO confirm that the subject Fiscal Year NSGCP Congressional appropriations data comports with the NSGO records of such Fiscal Year appropriations, and be accepted as presented, or adjusted as necessary. Further, I suggest that the Fiscal Year data that is included in the <SG graph.doc> graph (i.e., FY 1996 through FY 2008 NOAA and NSGCP Congressional appropriations) should be incorporated in an update of the <SEAallocationHIST98.xls> file.

I also note that while I am not very skilled when working with .xls files, it appears to me that some of the information that is contained in the <SEAallocationHIST98.xls> file may be either locked or otherwise limited to access and use.

The most favorable return and outcome of the 1-hour investment that the Panel and NSGO will jointly dedicate to this agenda subtopic would result if the Panel were to be provided with spreadsheets, tables and graphs that provide as much of the data that is requested below as possible. Further, I suggest that the <SG graph.doc> graph that was attached to the previously referenced report from Dick West should be distributed with the other spreadsheets, tables and graphs that should be provided to the Panel. I will forward, under separate cover, a version of the <SG graph.doc> graph that I have reformatted in a minor way (i.e., <WestRptNSGRPRReviewGraph070607RevHor.doc>).

I hope that the Panel and the NSGO will gain a common understanding and awareness, and engage in a thoughtful analysis, with respect to the issue of the NSGCP Congressional appropriation, including (1) the past history, current status, and future expectations of such appropriation amounts; (2) the past history, current status, and future expectations of amounts of funded and unfunded earmarks and directives (including the identification of such earmarks and

directives), (3) programmatic and operational implications of NSGCP Congressional appropriations, (4) trends, (5) influencing factors, (6) etc.

I also hope that the Panel will leave this session with at least some reasonable preliminary plan to develop strategies to address the NSGCP Congressional appropriation.

Following please find a listing of data and data categories that I believe are essential and necessary for the Panel and the NSGO to consider as they address the agenda subtopic of the NSGCP Congressional Appropriations.

Please note that the data set that I have requested includes a descriptive and itemized detail of the funded and unfunded Congressional earmarks and directives that are included in NSGCP Congressional appropriations. The indicated <SEAallocationHIST98.xls> file does not include data and information for this important component of the NSGCP Congressional appropriation. I believe that any meaningful and informed discussion of the history, trends, expectations and implications of the NSGCP Congressional appropriation must include data and information that itemizes and illustrates these Congressional funded and unfunded earmarks and directives.

Data Needs

1. Year by year history of Congressional appropriations to the NSGCP since 1982, in real dollars, and in inflation-adjusted dollars (19?? as a base; it appears that the <SEAallocationHIST98.xls> file used 1981 as the base year for the constant dollar calculation; that is, the subject file notes that “Inflation Adjusted Sea Grant 1981 Constant Dollars” used in this file were derived from “... GDP Implicit Price Deflators developed by the Bureau of Economic Analysis”).
2. Year by year history of Congressional appropriations to NOAA since 1982, in real dollars, and in inflation-adjusted dollars (19?? as base; please see above).
3. Side bar table of year by year history of Congressional appropriations to the NSGCP since FY 2003, in real dollars, and in inflation-adjusted dollars [i.e., “National Sea Grant College Program Act Amendments of 2002”: “... in any fiscal year in which the appropriations made under subsection (a)(1) exceed the amounts appropriated for fiscal year 2003 for the purposes described in such subsection, the Secretary shall distribute any excess amounts (except amounts used for the administration of the sea grant program) to any combination of the following: ...”].
4. Year by year history of Congressional earmarks and directives that are assigned to the NSGCP, indicating the amount of funding that was provided (funded earmarks and directives), or the amount of unfunded costs to the NSGCP budget (unfunded earmarks and directives). These earmarks and directives may include, but are probably not limited to: Fish Extension, Aquatic Nuisance Species, Zebra Mussel Research, Gulf of Mexico Oyster Initiative, Oyster Disease, Mobile Bay Fisheries Initiative, Gulf of Mexico Reef Fish Initiative, National Sea Grant Law Center, Oyster Disease Research, Aquatic Invasive Species Program, Marine Aquaculture Program, Lake Champlain Emerging Threats, NISA/Ballast Water Demonstrations, NISA/Alaska, Hawaii Micronesia Invasive Species Program, Invasive Milfoil, Atlantic Marine Aquaculture Center (CINEMAR), Pacific Tropical Ornamental Aquaculture,

Center for Aquaculture Development, West Alabama Shrimp Aquaculture Program, Urban Coastal Institute, Center for the Environment, Bioscreening Technology for Imported Seafood, Hawaii Micronesian Invasive Species, etc.

II. NSGCP Investment Portfolio

The NSGCP Investment Portfolio, for purposes of this agenda subtopic, is generally defined as the NSGCP-wide and individual program-specific investments in the programmatic elements of Research, Extension, Education, Communications, Administration and National Strategic Investments.

It is reasonable that the Panel should conduct a comprehensive review, and possess a broad understanding, of the history and trends of NSGCP-wide, and individual Sea Grant program-specific investments in research, and in other NSGCP Investment Portfolio categories (in real dollars, by percentage, and in inflation-adjusted dollars). It is important that the Panel possess an understanding of the proportional distribution of these funds as such occur across individual Sea Grant programs. This review should optimally track such investments since FY 1998, the years since the first PAT reviews were instituted.

Reasonable concern has been voiced by several entities, over several years, about the apparent and ongoing trend in the amount of NSGCP funds that are invested in research by individual Sea Grant Programs, and by the Sea Grant enterprise in aggregate. Concern has been expressed with respect to the trend in the amount of NSGCP funds that are invested in research, the impacts of these trends on NSGCP research, and what is thought to be a degradation of the amounts, and the comparative percentages, of the Sea Grant investment in research. It is understood that the respective performance of individual Sea Grant programs with regard to the distribution and allocation of dollars between major categories of the NSGCP Investment Portfolio is very different, due to the very different characteristics and nature of individual Sea Grant Programs; however, it is still necessary to look at trends in the performance of individual Sea Grant Programs in this regard.

I presume that the NSGO must routinely track, compile and maintain current and continuing data (e.g., through FY 2008) on an ongoing basis that is similar to the data that I request below. It would be extremely helpful if the NSGO would please attempt to provide as much of the requested data as possible. An informed collaboration of the NSGO and the Panel with respect to this agenda subtopic is really not possible or probable without the benefit of a current and complete comparative set of data; any attempt to provide the data sets that are indicated below would be extremely helpful. While the most thorough understanding of the NSGCP Investment Portfolio would derive from a review of the real dollar value and the inflation-adjusted dollar value of the investments that have been made in the respective categories of Research, Extension, Education, Communications, Administration and National Strategic Investments, a review of the real dollar value of these investments is sufficient at this time.

The most favorable return and outcome of the 1-hour investment that the Panel and NSGO will jointly dedicate to this agenda subtopic would result if the Panel were to be provided with spreadsheets, tables and graphs that provide as much of the data that is requested below as possible.

I hope that the Panel and the NSGO will gain a common understanding and awareness, and engage in a thoughtful analysis, with respect to the issues that are associated with the respective levels of the investment that have been made in the respective categories of the NSGCP Investment Portfolio.

I also hope that the Panel will leave this session with at least some preliminary plan that would guide further examination of this element of the NSGCP investment. That is, as we have previously been apprised, there appears to be growing concern with respect to the proportional distribution and investment of funds, on a NSGCP-wide basis, and on an individual program-specific basis, among the respective elements of Research, Extension, Education, Communications, Administration and National Strategic Investments, with specific concern having been expressed with respect to NSGCP expenditures in Research.

Following please find a listing of data and data categories that I believe are essential and necessary for the Panel and the NSGO to consider as they address the agenda subtopic of the NSGCP Investment Portfolio.

Data Needs

1. Year by year history of NSGCP-wide investments, in real dollars, and with percentage indicators, since FY 1988 (i.e., the 1st year of the PAT reviews), by the specific categories of Research, Extension, Education, Communications, Administration and National Strategic Investments).
2. Year by year history of individual program-specific investments, in real dollars, and with percentage indicators, since FY 1988 (i.e., the 1st year of PAT reviews) by the specific categories of Research, Extension, Education, Communications, Administration and National Strategic Investments).

III. Thank You

Thank you for your consideration of this data request. I understand the time constraints and work demands under which the NSGO is operating. I also understand that you will do all that is humanly possible at this time to provide the most comprehensive and relevant data to fulfill the data needs that I have expressed, and to provide the Panel and the NSGO with the most reasonable opportunity to engage in a meaningful collaboration with respect to the issues that relate to this agenda topic.

Best Regards,



Jeffrey R. Stephan