



**Comments of the Boat Owners Association of The United States
Regarding the Intracoastal Waterway Route ``Magenta Line''
on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Nautical Charts**

December 24, 2013

BoatU.S. is the largest organization of recreational boaters in the United States, with more than 500,000 members nationwide. For more than 45 years we have worked to ensure that our members, who own a wide array of types and sizes of boats, can continue to enjoy this healthy outdoor family recreation. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the continued depiction of a recommended route, a.k.a. the "Magenta Line", on nautical charts of the Intracoastal Waterway.

Recognizing the challenges of accurately depicting a recommended route, we urge the Office of Coast Survey to continue to place the Magenta Line on charts of the Intracoastal Waterway in areas where it can provide important guidance to boaters.

Accurate nautical charts are an important part of any trip on the water. Charts must provide sufficient information to allow for the planning and carrying out of a wide range of voyages. For thousands of boaters a year, that voyage is a trip on the Intracoastal Waterway. Following the Magenta Line is often an intrinsic part of that journey and it provides important guidance on the way. NOAA should reconsider its proposal to remove the Magenta Line from new editions of charts in areas where it is likely boaters could be confused as to the correct route. It is a helpful guide, particularly for those without local knowledge, as to the general course of the waterways. Removing it from new editions of charts would detract from navigational safety.

We agree with the proposal to continue depicting the Magenta Line, along with cautions as on its use in chart notes and local notice to mariners, on current editions of waterway charts. Combined with efforts to update the Line in areas where authoritative reports or information indicate proper re-positioning, its depiction will provide important safety information to mariners.

For many boaters, the ICW is a trip that is a once in a lifetime voyage where the boaters are not familiar with or are traveling on waterways for the first time. Also, boaters who have set out for a off-shore trip but take refuge in the Intracoastal Waterway during unexpected bad weather may lean on the added guidance of the Magenta Line. The line can provide significant assistance for mariners in this situations who may not have planned to travel in the waterway.

Comments of BoatU.S. Regarding the Intracoastal Waterway Route ``Magenta Line"
on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Nautical Charts

Page 2

The Office of Coast Survey should consider using the boating community itself to help improve the placement of the Magenta Line. So-called "crowd sourcing" methods of data collection can provide on-the-water information that could supplement traditional cartographic techniques. Given the constrained Federal fiscal environment, this is a sensible way to keep the Magenta Line updated on waterway charts.

In our view, an important distinction should be made in the use of the Magenta Line. To wit, the Line should be considered as guidance only and should not be followed blindly. It provides mariners a general "path to travel" but does not delineate specific courses to steer. While this concept is often stated in official navigation publications and commercial cruising guides, NOAA should consider putting resources towards educating boaters about the meaning and limitations of chart symbols such as the Magenta Line. Changes in symbology, such as using a dashed-line in areas where the correct path is less certain or varies frequently, should also be considered.

We commend the NOAA Office of Coast Survey for thoughtfully bearing in mind the views of those who use the waterways regarding the Magenta Line. It's placement on charts has a positive effect on boating safety. Please continue to depict the Magenta Line on waterway charts where it can help to safely guide boaters as it has since 1912.