



## Government Affairs

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**Comments of the Boat Owners Association of The United States  
Regarding the draft  
NOAA - Office of Coast Survey  
National Charting Plan**

**June 1, 2017**

BoatU.S. is the largest organization of recreational boaters in the United States, with more than 560,000 members nationwide. For more than 50 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 Office of Coast Survey's draft National Charting Plan and its implications for recreational boaters.

BoatU.S. appreciates the foresight and vision on the part of NOAA's Office of Coast Survey in drafting and presenting this plan for comment by the boating public and maritime community. The plan shows that NOAA recognizes the evolving needs of their users, is looking to create innovative products and use their resources efficiently.

Specifically of note:

We appreciate changes that will allow nautical charts to be updated with both critical and routine data more frequently and these changes viewed easily with the new NOAA Chart updates web page. This should allow boaters to easily view areas where new data has been applied to a chart and determine when to print or download a new edition.

It has long been a concern that the latest channel depth data is housed on various U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) websites and is not shown on NOAA charts. We appreciate efforts to reference the latest sources of data including USACE and U.S. Coast Guard to help recreational boaters access the most current data on their waterways. We support further collaboration with USACE, USCG and other federal and state agencies that collect and manage data to help facilitate safe navigation. We particularly urge NOAA to consider adding state regulatory information such as slow speed and wildlife protection zones.

We also recognize NOAA's renewed efforts to investigate and resolve chart uncertainties such as obstructions marked as reported, existence doubtful and position approximate dangers that currently exist on NOAA charts. Additionally while we understand the move to metrification of charts, we recognize that this may require substantial education of the recreational user.

The National Charting Plan lays out the current state of Nautical Charts, planned changes and a vision for the future. The uncertain timing for the vision for the future has left some in the recreational boating community concerned. Under the vision for the future, the statement concerning the end of raster nautical charts can be alarming without some sense of timing. We recognize and appreciate that NOAA is taking on a number of efforts to modernize nautical charts and improve efficiency. BoatU.S. feels strongly that NOAA's charting products need to continue to be available in a wide range of formats to meet the diverse navigation needs of the nation's recreational boaters. We see some form of paper charts as an essential need for the foreseeable future and strongly urge NOAA to work closely with the print-on-demand providers to ensure this need will be met.

Accurate nautical charts are an important part of any trip on the water. We recognize this opportunity to review and comment on the National Charting Plan and look forward to continuing to work with NOAA to ensure their products continue to meet the evolving needs of recreational boaters today and into the future.