

Appendix VIII

COAST GUARD AGENCY REPORT UNOLS COUNCILMEETING FEBRUARY 16-17, 1999

1. USCGC HEALY UPDATE

DELIVERY: With 30 June 1999 as the delivery date of the HEALY by Avondale Shipyards, the first unrestricted science cruise will begin in the February-March 2001 timeframe. The progress in planning the ice trials and science suite shakedown has been good and the Coast Guard appreciates the achievements of John Feitag, Terry Tucker, the AICC, and others in this effort.

RESEARCH FUNDING: Coordinated planning by the science community is required so that there will be enough funds to utilize all of the available days (200 plus per year) on the HEALY. The Coast Guard is encouraged that efforts to ensure full funding have begun. The agency cost for the HEALY has been set as \$20,000 per day.

2. POLAR ICEBREAKER UPDATE

POLAR SEA is now in the Antarctic supporting Operation DEEPFREEZE 98. After completing the Antarctic mission, the vessel will transit to the Bering Sea to conduct a funded experiment for J. Grebmeier at the St. Lawrence Island Polynia plus a possible Science-of-Opportunity cruise in the western Arctic. Then the POLAR SEA will go to a shipyard for reliability improvement yardwork from June to December 2000.

POLAR STAR is presently in Oregon undergoing yardwork until April 1999. At the end of June, the icebreaker will depart for training and Science-of-Opportunity cruises in the Arctic.

3. OMB ICEBREAKER REIMBURSEMENT PROPOSAL

At the UNOLS meetings in July 1998 and September 1998, we reported on details of the OMB icebreaker reimbursement proposal. To date, the Coast Guard has not been directed by OMB to amend the reimbursement model. Since this is a critical issue, we are repeating this information below.

As part of the OMB budget passback, the CG was instructed to seek full reimbursement for operating and capitol costs of the icebreakers from non-DOD users. This would require legislative changes to be submitted in the CG Omnibus Act, which contains a number of legislative proposals. The proposed Omnibus Act is currently held up in DOT for a variety of reasons. Once the bill clears DOT, OMB will put it into interagency clearance.

The Icebreaking Program's response to this OMB mandate was to point out that the government maintains a fleet of icebreakers for a variety of reasons including: (1) the need to regularly project U.S. presence in the Polar regions in general; (2) search and rescue (the GREENWAVE engine casualty stands as an excellent example); (3) marine environmental protection in the high latitudes, particularly with the ever increasing focus on Arctic oil reserves; (4) State Department Antarctic Treaty inspections; (5) support of research; and (5) for any future national contingency. For these reasons, the Coast Guard has gone on record as recommending that the incremental reimbursement system presently in place be continued as

the most equitable one. It has also been pointed out that a substantial increase in rates by the Coast Guard would make these ships uncompetitive with other oceanographic platforms and could result in a net decrease in recoupment of operating costs.