

Appendix VII

USCG Report

COAST GUARD AGENCY REPORT UNOLS COUNCIL MEETING JULY 1-2, 1998

1. USCGC HEALY UPDATE

DELIVERY: Feb 99 is still the official delivery date from Avondale Shipyards. Unofficially, some in the Coast Guard doubt that Avondale can make the February 1999 delivery date, which is crucial to the summer '99 ice trials schedule. The Coast Guard expects to be able to provide a more firm projection by the August Ice Trials Meeting. Ice trials planning has been progressing extremely well. John Freitag (UNOLS RVTEC Chair) and Terry Tucker (CRREL) have been designing much of the science and ice trials protocols and have been doing a superlative job.

CORING UPGRADE: Funding has been secured by the Coast Guard Icebreaking Program to proceed with the development of the 30-meter coring system on HEALY. Woods Hole (Mr. Jim Broda) has been negotiating with the HEALY Project staff on the design, which has been submitted to the Arctic Icebreaker Coordinating Committee for review and approval.

RESEARCH FUNDING: There is some concern within the Coast Guard over the apparent lack of a coordinated science plan for HEALY once the ship becomes operational. Of equal concern is what seems to be the consensus among potential users that there will be no additional funds budgeted to support researchers on the ship. The Coast Guard's impression is that there is a "Field of Dreams" approach ("build it and they will come"). While this may be true, top managers feel that there should be a fully articulated plan supporting a proposal for dedicated funds to put the government's investment to full use.

2. POLAR ICEBREAKER UPDATE

POLAR SEA deployed on 29 April for a three-month Arctic West Summer cruise. In May she participated as the command and control platform for the largest U.S./Russian/Japanese oil spill exercise to date off of Sakhalin Island. After picking up a 15-member science party in Nome she proceeded to the Arctic for 20 days of multi-discipline science operations. She will complete her assignments by assisting the Canadian Coast Guard with a crew change at the SHEBA site after the ice runway alongside the CCGS DEGROSEILLIERS becomes unsuitable for fixed wing aircraft caused by deterioration due to warm temperatures. POLAR SEA will deploy on Operation DEEP FREEZE in November.

POLAR STAR will be departing for an Arctic trip in late July. She too will provide transport for SHEBA scientists and crew in early August and again in early September. In between she will be conducting a science of opportunity cruise.

3. OMB ICEBREAKER REIMBURSEMENT PROPOSAL

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 of 1998, 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 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) DOS-led 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 would result in a net decrease in recoupment of operating costs.