APPENDIX IX

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Dr. Kenneth Johnson, Chair
UNOLS Council

Dear Dr. Johnson:

The UNOLS Council nearly 2 years ago formally expressed its concern over the impending retirement of the MOANA WAVE and the lack of any viable replacement vessel. The situation has, unfortunately not changed nor have the negative consequences diminished. The loss of SOEST's excellence port facility at Snug Harbor after 3 decades of efficient operation will curtail service to UNOLS and NOAA research and fishery vessels. It will not be replaceable in Honolulu in the future. The needs for a research ship ported in Honolulu arise from cost-savings from reduced transit costs to the Western Pacific and from the University's dependence on a long-endurance, dynamically positioned, swath mapping capable vessel for the future of its research programs. SOEST is the 4th largest ocean/earth science research and educational institution in the U.S. at $48 million annually in federal and state funds. Its record of ships operations is excellent. The State has offered to support ship's operations financially provided a replacement vessel comes to Hawaii.

Now, however, UNOLS is preparing to issue the draft document, "Potential changes on the horizon for the UNOLS Fleet," which assumes that the MOANA WAVE will not be replaced. Indeed, the report's principal concern is with finding the means to support the academic fleet even with the MOANA WAVE gone,

Presently, there are three options for replacement of the MOANA WAVE, each having a different impact on funding for ship's operations.

1. Replace MOANA WAVE with a new, high-endurance SWATH ship.
2. Replace MOANA WAVE with an existing class I UNOLS vessel.
3. Port the new AGOR 26, the NOAA Researcher, in Hawaii to be operated by the University on behalf of NOAA and UNOLS.

All options have the advantages that a central Pacific port facility is retained, a major commitment of State funds is added to the resources for oceanography, Hawaii's marine programs are preserved and overall transit costs are reduced, all without sacrificing cost effectiveness and quality of operations. All the evidence supports this assertion; SOEST's ship operations are as cost-effective and of as high a quality as other operators.

Option 1, while in most respects the most attractive option, impacts UNOLS funding compared to option 2

Option 2 reduces the Intermediate-to-large ship fleet by one ship, helping to alleviate the excess ship time available. The consequences for SIO or WHOI would be that they would operate one fewer large research vessel, presuming that the replacement vessel would come from one or the other of two multiple, larger ship operators.

Option 3 is still under discussion in NOAA but their inclination, at the moment, is to port the RESEARCHER on the east coast to maintain an east coast-west coast balance of large ships. If NOAA's requirements for research vessel time are to be met through utilization of the UNOLS fleet, then the pressure to reduce the size of the fleet should be largely relieved. In that event, replacing the MOANA WAVE with a new SWATH ship, option 1, should be a more agreeable alternative.

It would be helpful, at the least, to amend the report so that the MOANA WAVE is replaced by one or more of the options listed above. The report appears to be solving some of the fleet's funding problems at the expense of the University of Hawaii rather than at the expense of the institutions represented by the authors of the report. UNOLS probably should not issue a report that damages one of their institutions without the representation of that institution in the authorship.

In addition, the UNOLS council might wish to issue a statement that clearly and unequivocally states their interest in seeing the MOANA WAVE replaced.

Sincerely
Signed
C. Barry Raleigh
Dean

cc- UNOLS Council