

Ocean Exploration Advisory Board
A Federal Advisory Committee Act Committee

September 14, 2016

Honorable Kathryn D. Sullivan, PhD
Under Secretary of Commerce and
Administrator, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20330

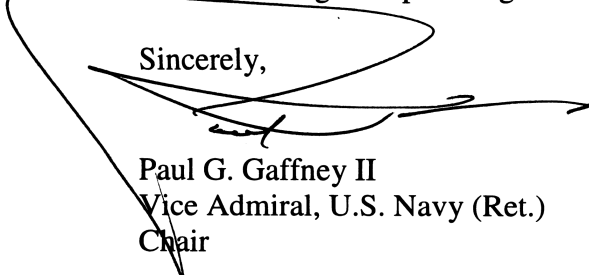
Dear Dr. Sullivan:

The Ocean Exploration Advisory Board has just completed its sixth meeting. We have positive news to report:

- Your important remarks in Hawaii about the value of ocean exploration set up the U.S. as a model. Thank you—and congratulations on the visibility you received.
- The field season for both the *Okeanos Explorer* and NOAA-funded E/V *Nautilus* set new records for valuable information collected, new discoveries, and public engagement.
- Both the NOAA Ocean Service and NOAA Fisheries have explained to us the value of ocean exploration for their respective missions, and we note that 100% of *Okeanos Explorer* days at sea this year met these line offices' requirements.
- The *Okeanos Explorer* completed 195 days at sea in remote regions, thanks largely to the close attention the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations paid to her material readiness and the leadership of her Commanding Officer.
- More than 95% of the Extended Continental Shelf field work has been completed.
- Apparent to us is closer cooperation between OER and other federal agencies, and with the Schmidt Ocean Institute.

Challenges lie ahead for ocean exploration campaigns to meet growing national and international requirements and to address science opportunities. These campaigns will require resource support and new technologies as the aging dedicated ocean exploration ships can no longer fully meet the mission. We hope you will carry this message and the good story of ocean exploration forward during the upcoming transition.

Sincerely,



Paul G. Gaffney II
Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy (Ret.)
Chair

cc: Dr. Richard Spinrad
NOAA Chief Scientist