



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

VADM Paul G. Gaffney II (ret.)
Chair, Ocean Exploration Advisory Board
1112 Gist Street
Columbia, SC 29201

FEB 21 2017

Dear VADM Gaffney:

I had hoped to be able to join the Ocean Exploration Advisory Board (OEAB) in Austin, Texas, for your last meeting as a member and Chair of the OEAB. I regret that I cannot be there, and I wanted to send you this letter of thanks and appreciation for your service to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). NOAA will forever be indebted to you for your three years of service as Chair of the OEAB and lifelong commitment to advancing the ocean exploration community.

Under your leadership and guidance the OEAB has become a collegial and dynamic body, composed of members of diverse perspectives and experiences, which has raised hard questions and provided practical guidance to NOAA leadership—for which I am very grateful. Your careful attention to the OEAB mandate and the NOAA Administrator's specific request to focus first on NOAA's Ocean Exploration Research (OER) program reinforced the OER connection to NOAA's mission priorities, thereby making OER a stronger and more effective program.

Your engagement with other Federal agencies involved in ocean exploration helped build and advance the concept of a national ocean exploration program. You are leaving behind a notable legacy and a highly functional OEAB that will undoubtedly continue to play an important advisory role for NOAA under its new chair and vice chairs.

You have my thanks—and that of all of NOAA—for your unfailing dedication to the OEAB, and for the value it provides to NOAA and the Nation. Here's hoping that you will now have some newfound free time to spend with Linda cheering on the Gamecocks in Colonial Life Arena and Williams-Brice Stadium!

With best regards and appreciation,

Benjamin P. Friedman
Deputy Under Secretary for Operations
Performing the duties of the Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
and NOAA Administrator

