



City of Seattle

February 12, 2010

The Honorable Gary Locke
Secretary
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

The Honorable Jane Lubchenco
Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere
Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave NW, Room 5128
Washington, DC 20230

Subject: City of Seattle Proposal to Locate MOC-P at WRC and/or FCS

Dear Secretary Locke and Under Secretary Lubchenco:

The City of Seattle has followed the recent Solicitation for Offers (SFO) process for NOAA's Marine Operations Center-Pacific (MOC-P) with great interest. In partnership with our maritime community, we have argued at all levels of government that Seattle remains the best home for MOC-P when considering both mission and cost.

Seattle still offers the same benefits it did in 1962, when MOC-P first chose its current home on Lake Union. These amenities include: protected freshwater moorage, which can double the useful life of ship hulls; proximity to a robust maritime sector, made up of approximately 1,400 businesses that perform maintenance and provisioning for NOAA ships; a highly educated work force; proximity to the University of Washington, its Climate Impact Group, and other world class marine biology and atmospheric research programs; and proximity to NOAA's Western Regional Center and NW Fisheries Science Center.

We understand that the Department of Commerce and NOAA intend to fully comply with the Government Accountability Office's (GAO) decision sustaining the protest filed by the Port of Bellingham. We further understand that the primary corrective action is to determine if there is a practicable alternative to the Port of Newport that does not involve development in a base floodplain, and that NOAA has chosen to limit its assessment of practicable alternatives to the final revised proposals submitted in response to the SFO.

We respectfully ask that the Department of Commerce and NOAA expand their assessment to include the practicable alternative of locating the Marine Operations Center-Pacific at an existing federally-owned facility. Specifically, we understand that the Western Regional Center and Federal Center South, as standalone facilities or in combination, offer existing office, shop, and moorage facilities capable of accommodating MOC-P without major construction.

The Western Regional Center (WRC) was planned and constructed in the 1970s and early 1980s under the guidance of then Senator Warren Magnuson, Seattle City Council, and the Sand Point Liaison Committee as a center for all west coast NOAA operations. Today, the Western Regional Center houses

the largest variety of NOAA operations in the United States and is the largest NOAA employment center outside of Washington D.C.

Federal Center South (FCS) was originally constructed by the Ford Motor Company in 1932 as a vehicle assembly plant and showroom and has a rich history. Today, FCS is owned by the General Services Administration and their primary tenant is the Army Corps of Engineers. Moorage for two to three NOAA ships has been provided at Federal Center South for the past several years and the facility remains available for that purpose.

NOAA should consider locating MOC-P at WRC and/or FCS for the following reasons:

1. All MOC-P employees can be housed at FCS and/or WRC within existing facilities. This could be done at a very small fraction of the cost of moving to Newport.
2. MOC-P's ship berthing requirements can continue to be met without construction of costly in-water facilities. We understand that MOC-P rarely, if ever, has more than three ships in port at the same time. Two ships can continue to be accommodated at the WRC, and two to three ships can continue to be accommodated at FCS with existing pier facilities that are 100% available to MOC-P.

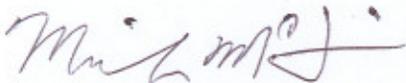
In the event that more than five NOAA-supported ships are in Seattle at the same time, interim moorage could be secured at the Port of Seattle or other Seattle locations.

3. "Industrial work" that cannot be performed at WRC can be performed at FCS, where noise issues are not a concern and where maritime support services (e.g., dry docks) are close by.
4. If NOAA determines that additional piers and office space would have to be constructed in order to house MOC-P at WRC for the long-term, the City of Seattle's elected leadership and leaders of the neighborhoods adjacent to WRC are fully supportive.
5. In the early 1970s, WRC was originally designed to house MOC-P. We understand that, if MOC-P needed to expand at WRC, no additional dredging would be required, and that infrastructure (electricity, water, etc.) already exists to expand the facility.
6. Locating MOC-P at WRC can be done without any further solicitation processes, ever. These processes are very expensive, time consuming, and disruptive for MOC-P employees and their mission.

Our proposal represents tens of millions of dollars in savings for the Department of Commerce, NOAA and, most importantly, federal taxpayers, compared to the alternative of moving from Seattle and building new facilities on leased property. These savings include approximately \$7 million in one-time moving costs, more than \$20 million in construction costs, and more than a \$1 million in increased annual operating costs (e.g., transportation costs, provisioning, ship repair, etc.) incurred by locating in a rural area far removed from a necessary maritime support system.

We strongly urge you to consider locating the Marine Operations Center-Pacific at the Western Regional Center and/or Federal Center South – two federally-owned facilities with room to grow. Our proposal is supported by neighborhood leaders. Our proposal meets GAO's guidance. Our proposal best supports NOAA's ability to carry out its mission. Our proposal would save tens of millions of taxpayer dollars.

Sincerely,



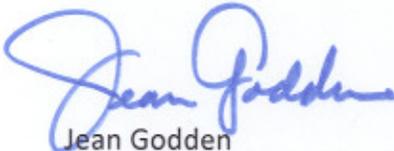
Michael McGinn
Mayor



Richard Conlin
Council President



Nick Licata
Councilmember



Jean Godden
Councilmember



Tom Rasmussen
Councilmember



Sally J. Clark
Councilmember



Bruce A. Harrell
Councilmember



Tim Burgess
Councilmember



Sally Bagshaw
Councilmember



Mike O'Brien
Councilmember

Enclosures: Maps (2) of WRC and FCS

CC: Senator Cantwell, Senator Murray, Congressman Dicks, Congressman McDermott, Congressman Reichert, Congressman Smith, Representative Inslee