



31 August 2009

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Ms. Sheila Semans
California Coastal Conservancy
P.O. Box 1173
Mendocino, CA 95460

ISSUES:

1. Lack of Small-Business participation in *California Coastal and Marine Mapping Project*,
2. Funding of Marine Surveys that are conducted without State-required Survey Permits,
3. Use of Out-of-State Vessels and Surveyors for State-Funded Marine Surveys.

Dear Ms. Semans:

Thank you for giving Sea Surveyor, Inc. this opportunity to submit the attached statement of qualifications for conducting coastal and marine mapping surveys for the California Coastal Conservancy.

Sea Surveyor, Inc. has previously raised objections to the California Coastal Conservancy (funding agency) and State Lands Commission (permitting agency) regarding the biased selection process, unfair contracting procedures, and disregard of State-required permits and environmental compliance by the *California Coastal and Marine Mapping Project*.

The purpose of this letter is to formally request that Sea Surveyor, Inc. be given the opportunity to speak at the next scheduled meeting of the California Coastal Conservancy regarding the following issues:

1. Lack of local, small-business participation in the *California Coastal and Marine Mapping Project*: The *Coastal and Marine Mapping Project* is being conducted without requirement for local, small business participation. Survey vessels and field personnel presently conducting the State-funded survey are from outside California.
2. The Coastal Conservancy is funding marine surveys that are conducted without State survey permits: The *California Coastal and Marine Mapping Project* is managed and conducted by Federal, State, and private entities that are or have operated without State-required survey permits. Entities that are or have conducted surveys in California coastal waters without permits include NOAA, Seafloor Mapping Lab at CSUMB, Center for Habitat Studies at Moss Landing Marine Labs, California Department of Fish & Game, and Fugro-Pelagos.
3. Use of out-of-state vessels and surveyors for State-funded marine surveys: The vessel presently conducting the multibeam survey for the *California Coastal and Marine Mapping Project* is the *M/V Pacific Star*, based in Anchorage, Alaska. The *M/V Pacific Star's* crew and surveyors are almost entirely from outside California. **California-based vessels and surveyors are being excluded from this State-funded offshore survey.**

For 25-years, Sea Surveyor has held Marine Survey Permit No. PRC-8429 issued by the California State Lands Commission. As a State-permittee, Sea Surveyor objects to the selection process used to award the *California Coastal and Marine Mapping Project*. The selected contractor, a joint-venture of Fugro/Seafloor Mapping Lab, was based on the recommendation of 57 invited attendees to the “Strategic Planning Workshop for California Marine Habitat Mapping”, which was organized by and held at the Seafloor Mapping Lab in December 2005. Sea Surveyor, Inc. was specifically not invited to participate in the Strategic Mapping Workshop and resulting RFP, which effectively eliminated us from competing for the survey. Being a survey-permit holder for 25-years, Sea Surveyor is entitled to participate in any State-funded contracting opportunity related to offshore surveys. **The State denied Sea Surveyor, Inc. the right to fair and equal participation in the *California Coastal and Marine Mapping Project*.**

If allowed to speak at the next Coastal Conservancy meeting, Sea Surveyor will request future solicitations be structured in a fair and unbiased manner to provide a level playing field on which small California companies can compete. Specifically, Sea Surveyor will request the California Coastal Conservancy:

- notify all State survey permit holders (including Sea Surveyor, Inc.) of solicitations related to marine mapping,
- require future “Strategic Mapping Workshops” to include all State survey permit holders
- require local, small business participation for State-funded surveys
- suspend funding to all Federal, State, and private entities that have or are surveying in State waters without a required survey permit.

Sea Surveyor is particularly concerned that CSUMB’s Seafloor Mapping Lab has trained a generation of California college students to conduct offshore surveys without State-required permits or environmental compliance. NOAA and the California Department of Fish & Game have hired former CSUMB students and employed them to conduct offshore surveys without State-required permits or environmental compliance. Sea Surveyor respectfully requests the Coastal Conservancy stop funding offshore surveys by NOAA, California Department of Fish & Game, CSUMB Seafloor Mapping Lab, and the Moss Landing Lab Habitat Studies Group until these groups become compliant with State permit requirements.

I genuinely appreciate your review of these issues, and I hope the California Coastal Conservancy will consider Sea Surveyor, Inc. for future marine mapping projects.

Sincerely,



Sea Surveyor, Inc.

Steve Sullivan
Vice-President

Cc:

1. Mr. Paul Thayer, California State Lands Commission, Sacramento, CA
2. Dr. Rikk Kvitek, Seafloor Mapping Lab at CSUMB