



## Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association

Our eyes on the Southeast's ocean and coastal waters

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South Carolina

Georgia

Florida

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July 31, 2015

The Honorable Kathryn D. Sullivan, Ph.D.  
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW Room 5128  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Dr. Sullivan:

Today marks the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the wreck of a Spanish fleet on the east coast of Florida. Over a dozen ships and one thousand lives were lost because of that 1715 hurricane. Such a horrific event would not happen today, but only if the current minimal environmental observing infrastructure is maintained or improved.

It has come to the attention of the Southeast Coastal Ocean Observing Regional Association (SECOORA) that Cape Canaveral buoys 41009 and 41010 are scheduled to be removed. This would cause a significant degradation to the nation's vital coastal ocean observing systems for many reasons only a few of which are highlighted below (complete list available on request):

- East central Florida waters are already significantly under sampled (readings in "Coastal Ocean Observing Systems", Elsevier 2015, quantify the scientific effect of this infrastructure loss on nowcasting and forecasting).
- 200,000 boaters and fishers recreate in these waters, Port Canaveral is the world's second busiest cruise terminal, and US Navy Trident submarines regularly visit.
- The Florida Current, which these buoys straddle, is a complex of eddies and streamers that challenge navigation and Search and Rescue (two Florida teenagers are lost in these waters as this is being written).
- Future manned spacecraft launches from Kennedy Space Center will need direct ocean information in case a mission abort is ordered.
- Wind and wave conditions in this most hurricane prone area will no longer be available to weather forecasters charged with protection of life and property at sea and ashore.

SECOORA urges reconsideration of this plan. We suggest novel alternatives including additional funding to SECOORA through the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS) Office, for local operation and maintenance by our members.

Thank you for your attention to this most urgent matter to the citizens of the southeast.

Yours truly,

Conrad C. Lautenbacher Jr.  
SECOORA Chairman

cc: Debra Hernandez, SECOORA Executive Director  
SECOORA Board of Directors  
Zdenka Willis, Director, US IOOS Program Office, NOAA