

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

October 16, 2009

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

Dear Secretary Locke and Under Secretary Lubchenco:

I write to request that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) provide additional information relating to the long-term lease for the Marine Operations Center – Pacific. In particular, please provide the following documents:

- Any analyses on the impacts that moving the MOC-P facility from its current location would have on NOAA's MOC-P employees;
- Any analyses of the direct costs of moving the MOC-P facility from its current location, including the analyses that were the basis of the \$7.3 million "charge" applied to offers more than 50 miles from the current MOC-P location;
- Any analyses of the indirect and long-term costs of moving the MOC-P facility;
- Any analyses or plans examining how NOAA might cope with the logistical hurdles of locating MOC-P a significant distance from the Sand Point facility;
- NOAA's report/response to the Government Accountability Office;
- Any Business Case Analyses;
- Any Alternatives Analyses or Economic Analysis of Alternatives;
- Any other analyses comparing the costs of pursuing a long-term lease for the MOC-P facility with the costs of the purchase of property, new construction, or utilization/renovation of existing federal properties;
- Any analyses of the feasibility of utilizing existing federal properties;
- Documentation of the official decision to pursue a lease instead of the purchase of property, new construction, or utilization of existing federal properties;
- Any materials provided to the NOAA Facilities Investment Management Board and Department of Commerce Real Property Review Board, as well as all written reviews and assessments from either of those bodies;
- The original cost estimates for the MOC-P facility, as well as all subsequent updates to those costs estimates, including spending plans; and,
- Any other elements of a Capital Investment Review conducted under the NOAA Facilities Capital Planning and Project Management Manual.

If any of the documentation listed above cannot be provided because it does not exist, please confirm that the analyses were not done. If any of the documents listed above do exist but cannot be provided for other reasons, please provide a full legal explanation as to why the Department of Commerce believes they cannot be provided.

While I appreciate the attention and resources NOAA has recently invested in the competitive process for the Marine Operations Center–Pacific, I have serious doubts about whether the final award decision is truly in the best long-term interest of NOAA, its scientific mission, and its employees. As chair of the Senate subcommittee that oversees NOAA, it is part of my oversight responsibilities to make sure that I, and the public, fully understand the rationale behind this decision.

Sincerely,



Maria Cantwell

Chair

Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere,
Fisheries and Coast Guard