



THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI  
Governor

September 11, 2006

Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher  
Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
14<sup>th</sup> & Constitution Ave. NW  
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Vice Admiral Lautenbacher:

Before I explain the reason for my letter, I first want to thank you for recently meeting with my staff in Sacramento regarding the West Coast's ocean salmon fishing disaster. As you and Secretary Gutierrez recognize, the limits on the 2006 season resulted in economic hardship to Oregon's coastal communities. I am sincerely grateful for your efforts leading to the declaration that a commercial fishery failure exists for the region.

I understand that in addition to discussing the salmon fishery during your meeting in Sacramento, you emphasized the importance of developing an ocean observing system. In Oregon, we similarly recognize the importance of increasing our knowledge about interactions between the ocean, atmosphere and land. It is clear to me that a critical component of an effective ocean observation system is seafloor mapping.

As you know, Oregon exists at the edge of a vast and moving tectonic plate boundary, which has the power to produce earthquakes and tsunamis similar to what the world recently witnessed in Indonesia in 2004. The extent of inundation from a possible Oregon coast tsunami is difficult to predict due to the lack of data about Oregon's seafloor. Collecting shallow water bathymetric data is considered critical for improving tsunami inundation models. This finding is included in NOAA's draft National Tsunami Research Plan, which is currently under revision and review.

Unfortunately, other than routine surveys for nautical charting, the funding levels to implement the priorities laid out in the draft Tsunami Research Plan are quite low. At the same time, it appears that considerable funding is being directed towards positioning tsunami warning buoys in some locations that have minimal tsunami threat, such as the U.S. east coastal region. My understanding is that the tsunami DART buoys which are used today may be, even for areas like Oregon, of little help in a major earthquake and tsunami because they provide little time for people onshore to react effectively.

Vice Admiral Conrad Lautenbacher

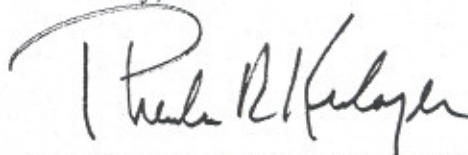
September 11, 2006

Page Two

For these reasons, I ask your help in leading NOAA to prioritize actions that will directly benefit coastal populations such as in Oregon, which will be affected if a Sumatra-like earthquake and tsunami occur in the near future. Since these events will come without warning, mitigation must be done well in advance. Nearshore bathymetric mapping is one such mitigation activity in which NOAA has significant expertise and interest.

Oregon supports your vision for an improved ocean observation system. Mapping the seafloor off of Oregon will provide information that is critical to protecting life and property in our coastal towns. I look forward to working with you to obtain this important data.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Theodore R. Kulongoski', written in a cursive style.

THEODORE R. KULONGOSKI  
Governor

TRK:jh:ab

c: David Green, NOAA Tsunami Program Manager  
Oregon Congressional Delegation  
Members of Oregon Coastal Caucus  
Scott McMullen, Chair, Ocean Policy Advisory Council