

**15<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE IHO INTER-REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
IHO-IRCC15  
Tokyo, Japan, 12-14 June 2023**

**UNITED STATES- CANADA HYDROGRAPHIC COMMISSION**

**USCHC report to IRCC15**

**1. Chair/Vice Chair**

Chair: Dr. Geneviève Béchar, Director General, Canadian Hydrographic Service  
Vice-Chair: RDML Benjamin E. Evans, Director, Office of Coast Survey, NOAA

**2. Membership**

Members: Canada, United States  
Associate member(s): none  
Permanent Observers: IHO Secretariat

**3. Meetings:**

USCHC47	May 2024 (Planned)	St. Johns Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada	Chair: Dr. Geneviève Béchar V. Chair: RDML Benjamin Evans
USCHC46	March 16-17, 2023	Mobile, Alabama USA	Chair: RDML Benjamin Evans V. Chair: Dr. Geneviève Béchar
USCHC45	June 9-10, 2022	Ottawa, Canada	Chair: Dr. Geneviève Béchar V. Chair: RDML Benjamin Evans
USCHC44	March 18-19, 2021	VTC	Chair: RDML Benjamin Evans V. Chair: Dr. Geneviève Béchar

Hydrographic Geospatial Products and Services Committee	monthly	VTC	Co-leads: Ms. Christie Ence, NOAA Mr. Louis Malthais, CHS (2020-2022) Ms. Laura Columbe, CHS (2022-present)
---	---------	-----	--

**4. Current [RHC] Working Groups:**

Hydrographic Geospatial Products and Services Committee

**5. Status of IRCC actions and recommendations to RHCs**

**a) Status of Actions (relevant for the USCHC):**

*IRCC14/ Action 1: IRCC invited RHCs and Subordinate bodies to provide comments and inputs on the governance document on Dual Fuel Concept for S-100 ECDIS, intersessionally. (Permanent)*

**Ongoing**

**b) Status of Recommendations to RHCs:**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 1: RHC are encouraged to increase the collaboration with the Data Quality WG and to try to find candidates for the vacancy of the Chair and Secretary positions.*

**Ongoing.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 2:* RHC to discuss how HO's can assume a geo-coordinating role to help ensure provision of data on a regional level.

**Ongoing. US (NOAA) and CA (CHS) convene monthly meetings to address charting harmonization in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence region. The USCHC has also established an S-100 coordinator to address data sharing for S-100 services on a regional level anticipated in the future.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 4:* RHC to start or proceed with the debate on how the climate change related activities can be further investigated and what can be the role of the IHO.

**Ongoing. At USCHC46, CA and US shared information on Ocean Decade actions and prospective intersections of efforts related to hydrography and climate change. USCHC47 is scheduled to take place in May 2024 and the topic of hydrography and climate change is recommended for the agenda.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 5:* RHC to Encourage relevant Member States to report to the IMO Secretariat and the Chair of the EGC Coordinating Panel on the progress and status of implementation of newly recognized mobile satellite services by MSI providers.

**Completed. MS informed have been informed and will coordinate with respective national authority representatives to the IMO.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 6:* RHCs to establish an S-100 Coordinator role.

**Completed.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 7:* RHCs to apply Action WENDWG12/33 (WEND-100 Product Matrix will be made available on the WENDWG Repository webpage when finalized).

**Completed. See USCHC46-10B.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 8:* RHC to encourage Member States and submitting institutions to engage with the IHO Secretariat early in the process of them preparing submissions for program recognition.

**Ongoing**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 9:* RHC encourage Member States and submitting institutions to consult the Guidelines, the FAQs and the White Paper (IHR-Nov-2017 – Article: Maintaining the Standards of Competence for Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers) early in the process of preparing submissions for program recognition.

**Ongoing.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 10:* RHC to encourage all Member States to respond to IHO CL 21/2020 and, if possible, offer a positive response, even if qualified, to enable provision of CSB data into the public domain collected from ships within waters subject to their national jurisdiction.

**Completed. CA and USA support the CSB initiative. See “Acceptance of Crowdsourced Bathymetry Activities and Provision of Resultant Datasets in National Waters of Jurisdiction” on IHO CSBWG webpage.**

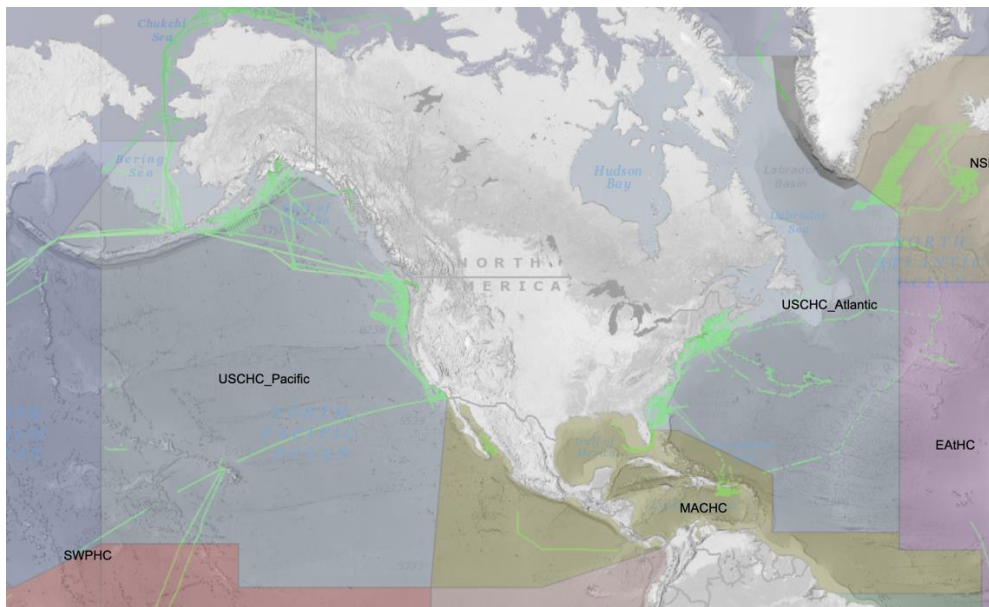
*IRCC14/Recommendation 11:* RHC Chairs to bring the IRCC CL 1/2020 to the attention of all coastal states within their respective RHC, encouraging them to offer a positive response, even if qualified, to enable provision of CSB data into the public domain collected from ships within waters subject to their national jurisdiction.

**Not applicable. All coastal states in the USCHC region support the CSB initiative. See “Acceptance of Crowdsourced Bathymetry Activities and Provision of Resultant Datasets in National Waters of Jurisdiction” on IHO CSBWG webpage.**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 12: RHC to encourage Member States to release datasets or subsets into the public domain via the IHO DCDB.*

**Ongoing. Over 85 surveys from the USCHC region were added to the DCDB database since June 2022. Data contributors include: U.S. Academic Fleet (21), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (51), U.S. Coast Guard (9), Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (5).**

**Nearly 30 of the NOAA-contributed surveys are a result of the NOAA Data Rescue Project – a concerted effort to retrieve data collected for NOAA projects in prior years, in some cases going back 10 or more years, that have been retained on ships and not yet submitted to the DCDB.**



*Figure 1: Multibeam bathymetry data collected in the USCHC region and added to the IHO DCDB database between June 2022-present.*

*IRCC14/Recommendation 13: RHC to encourage Member States to support the CSB initiative with positive actions, such as requiring all research vessels to collect bathymetric data for late uploading, when on passage or when it does not interfere with other research activities.*

**Ongoing. New data continues to be recorded in the region by Petroleum Geo-Services (PGS), the Great Lakes Observing System (GLOS) and users of Rosepoint’s Coastal Explorer software. These data, when collected within the waters of Canada and the U.S. are made publicly discoverable due to the positive response to IHO CL 21/2020.**

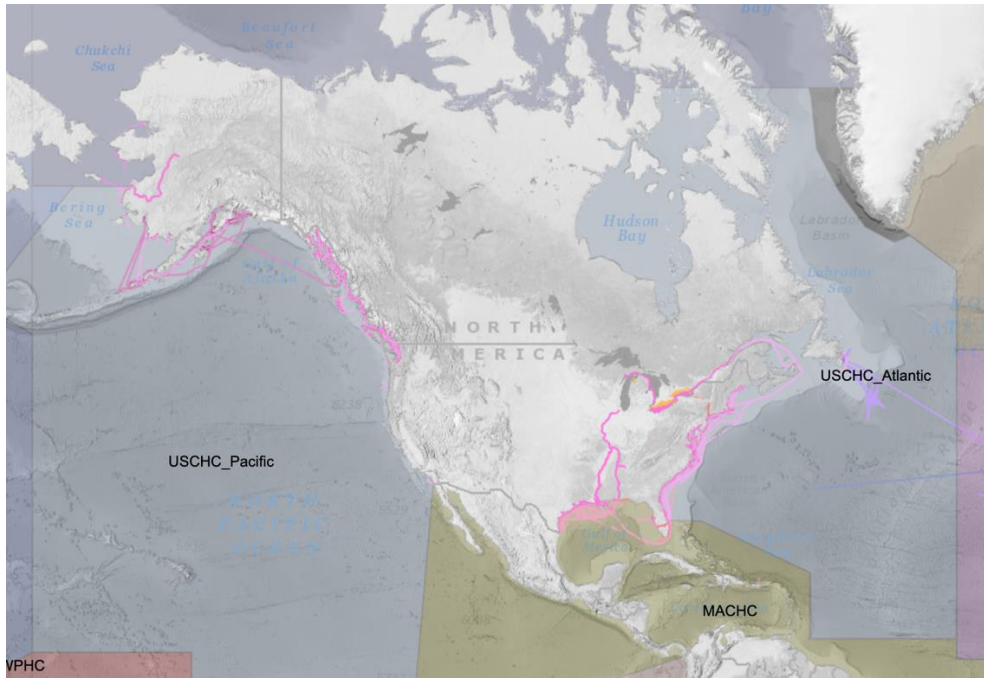


Figure 2: Crowdsourced bathymetry data recorded in the USCHC region and added to the IHO DCDB database between June 2022-present.

*IRCC14/Recommendation 14:* Encourage RHCs to actively contribute with new data to GEBCO.  
**Ongoing. The GEBCO/Seabed 2020 coordinator for USCHC is Andy Armstrong at [Andy.Armstrong@noaa.gov](mailto:Andy.Armstrong@noaa.gov).**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 15:* Encourage RHCs to discuss how nations can share existing data.  
**Ongoing**

*IRCC14/Recommendation 16:* RHCs to encourage Member State and stakeholder bathymetric data contributions to the DCDB, regardless of origin.  
**Ongoing**

## 6. Agenda Items:

- Scoping the future of paper charts e.g paper charts derived from ENC
- Hydrographic Geospatial Products and Services and related connections to UN GGIM and other MSDI initiatives
- WEND and S-100 Implementation
- Charting Harmonization in Transboundary Areas (Great Lakes and Atlantic Ocean)
- National Contributions to Seabed 2030
- Implementation of the IHO Strategic Plan including support to IHO priorities such as Empowering Women in Hydrography, US-CA hydrographic support to the Ocean Decade of Ocean Science. Includes conducting a gap analysis of US and CA against the IHO SP goals, targets and performance indicators.
- Agency Status reports (National Reports and national initiatives-such as Canada S-100 Committee establishment; personnel updates to ensure proper lines of communication, etc...)
- Capacity Building, including coordinating RHC meeting with annual Hydrographic Conferences, discussing the “hydrographer of the future” (skill sets, diversity, etc...)

## 7. USCHC cooperation with stakeholders (organizations, industry, etc.):

Annual USCHC meetings are held immediately following annual hydrographic conferences to facilitate opportunities for discussions and inclusion of stakeholders.

## 8. Difficulties encountered and challenges yet to be addressed

- Completing chart harmonization in transboundary areas
- Fully implementing the IHO Strategic Plan in the USCHC region and reconciling tracking and reporting of performance measures from the USCHC into the global tracking system
- Implementing WEND-100 and harmonizing and coordinating the delivery of S-100 products and service in transboundary waters

## 9. Achievements and lessons learned:

USCHC Achievements/outputs/conclusions:

- Transboundary collaboration in the Great Lakes continuing and now expanding to the Atlantic and Pacific regions.
- Discussions on coverage responsibilities for U.S. and Canada in southern Lake Superior and Maine/New Brunswick are ongoing.
- Coordinated data transfer of Canadian electronic chart cell in eastern Lake Ontario for U.S. hydrographic survey planning.
- Helped facilitate conversation between U.S. Board of Geographic Names (BGN) and Advisory Committee on Undersea Feature Names (ACUFN) to ensure coordinated efforts on naming a seamount chain crossing the boundary.
- Work on Annex to Puget Sound MOA to revise break in national responsibility from 47°59'N to 48°N to remove the need for a new regrided Canadian cell with very narrow, “sliver” coverage.
- Coordinating hydrographic surveys in transboundary areas and documenting those via the Schedule A process of the NOAA-CHS Memorandum of Understanding.
- Ongoing work on upgrading the USCHC Transboundary Web App site to reflect cell cut and single-agency solution decisions throughout all U.S./Canada transboundary coverage.
- Continued support by US and CA for the IHO Crowdsourced Bathymetry Initiative (e.g.: positive responses to IHO CL 21/2020, serve as current Chair (US) and vice Chair (CA) of CSBWG)
- Data contributions from US and CA in USCHC region to IHO DCDB and SB2030
- Initial IHO Strategic Plan Gap Analysis and initial completion of the IGIF matrix
- USCHC focal points
  - Seabed 2030/CSB Coordinator: Andy.Armstrong@noaa.gov

## 10. Conclusions:

The USCHC is actively addressing topics of importance identified by the IHO and continued progress toward successful realization of those goals remains underway.

## 11. Actions required of IRCC:

The IRCC is invited to:

- a. Note the report of the U.S. Canada Hydrographic Commission
- b. Take any action considered appropriate.

Dr. Geneviève Béchard  
USCHC Chair