

**Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission (ARHC)
Portsmouth, New Hampshire, United States, January 30-31, 2014**

Communications with Arctic Council's
Protection Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) (Committee)

Submitted by:	United States of America and Canada
Executive Summary:	The Arctic Council's Working Group on the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), at its September 2013 meeting in Rostov, Russia, decided to seek information from Arctic States on the currency and scope of nautical charting in the Arctic. This paper provides background to that request and offers options for the ARHC to respond to the anticipated written request of the PAME Secretariat for this information.
Related Documents:	ARHC2-04 D Assessment of Paper and Digital Chart Coverage ARHC2-04 D INF1 Status of Arctic Ocean Nautical Chart Coverage PAME (II)/13/4.1(c)/Paper on ARHC Activities Update by Uds
Related Projects:	http://www.pame.is/index.php/about-pame .

Introduction / Background

The International Hydrographic Bureau and member states of the ARHC have made a priority to raise awareness of the state of hydrography in the Arctic to national policy makers and relevant organizations concerned with matters important to Arctic navigation.

The Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group (PAME) is one of six Arctic Council working groups. PAME is the focal point of the Arctic Council's activities related to the protection and sustainable use of the Arctic marine environment. It has a specific mandate to keep under review the adequacy of global and regional legal, policy and other measures, and where necessary to make recommendations for improvements that would support the Arctic Council's Arctic Marine Strategic Plan (2004).

The United States and Canada informed the PAME Working Group of the existence and current efforts of the ARHC immediately prior to the September 2013 meeting of PAME in Rostov, Russia (see PAME (II)/13.4.1 (c)). PAME discussed and adopted the following Records of Decision (RoDs):

- *PAME requests that the Secretariat invite the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO), in consultation with members of the*

Arctic Regional Hydrographic Commission (ARHC), to provide relevant updates to PAME as requested on the status of hydrography and nautical charting in the Arctic region and to identify where there may be opportunities for collaboration on areas of common interest.

- *PAME invites member governments to submit information to PAME I-2014 on the currency and accuracy of nautical charting and of future charting plans in Arctic waters subject to their jurisdiction*

The ARHC member state hydrographic offices individually and collectively can likely address these interests. For example, in 2011, Canada submitted a draft paper to the ARHC that provides much of the basic information of the status of chart coverage in the Arctic.

PAME's next meeting will take place in Anchorage Alaska in 11-14 February 2014.

Analysis/Discussion

PAME is concerned with the safety of shipping and shipping practices as they relate to the protection of the Arctic marine environment. ARHC is concerned that hydrographic data and products used in navigational products be improved and that mariners be aware of the uncertainties related to navigational products for the Arctic Ocean region.

The efforts of the respective organizations with similar goals can be enhanced through timely information exchange and cooperation. ARHC would be the logical authoritative source to assemble, validate, and source the information sought by PAME. Support to PAME will demonstrate the value of the ARHC and the IHO as the authoritative information resource for hydrographic information to the Arctic Council.

However, the above PAME request and invitation will require:

- clarification as to the scope of what is included in a "status of charting in the Arctic"
- dialogue and exploration of the areas "cooperation and communication" between the organizations

The draft paper presented at ARHC-2 by Canada can be updated to reflect any developments and updates from the ARHC member states.

Conclusions

ARHC might readily be in a strong position to formally review and finalize the 2011 draft paper and submit to PAME either by February 2014 or at another agreeable deadline in 2014 or thereafter.

Member states may be in position to collect and share future charting plans to provide a circumpolar perspective to the Arctic Council's PAME Working Group.

Recommendations

1. Discuss the above opportunity for a technical connection between the hydrographic offices and the appropriate Arctic Council Working Group.
2. Subject to discussion, agree to provide an official summary document to PAME in 2014 at a time agreed by the ARHC member states.
3. Subject to discussion, identify a coordination focal point (s) for follow-up dialogue and RHC coordination with PAME.

Justification and Impacts

Action Required of ARHC

The ARHC is invited to:

1. Consider the background and recommendations above.
2. Discuss next steps to enhance the quality of regional hydrographic information that could be generated and provided either individually or collectively to PAME in the future.

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