



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

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March 7, 2013

Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation  
c/o Peg Petruny-Parker, Director  
PO Box 278  
Saunderstown, RI 02874

Dear Ms. Parker,

Thank you for your outstanding leadership and coordination of the Consortium for Ocean Leadership (OL) funded workshop series regarding Pioneer Array navigational safety and micro-siting for the Ocean Observatories Initiative (OOI) project. OL provided the National Science Foundation (NSF) with the final Pioneer Array design and deployment package this month, which incorporated public, scientific, and Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation (CFRF) workshop input from over 42 months of outreach and design efforts. Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) led the formation of the final Pioneer Array design package and NSF is pleased to report that it allowed for many of the CFRF recommendations to be fully incorporated and partially addressed others where practicable. WHOI's scientific and technical leadership skills were excellent throughout the process. OL will provide CFRF with their responses in a separate letter from their Principal Investigator, Dr. Timothy Cowles or his designee. NSF determined the workshop series was a very successful endeavor and we would like to thank all of the CFRF staff and participants for their time and dedication.

After OL accepted the January 2012 CFRF report, NSF reviewed the report and identified a subset of the workshop recommendations that fall outside the scope of OL's federally funded award. These recommendations, referenced from the CFRF workshop report dated January, 2012 include numbers 15 (partial), 17, 18 and 19. The NSF responses are as follows:

***Recommendation 19: Scientists and fishermen recommend that other workshops be organized to provide additional opportunities for scientists involved with the Pioneer Array project, fisheries scientists and managers, and members of the commercial fishing industry to discuss the data that will be collected as part of the Pioneer Array project and how it might be interfaced with fisheries science needs and priorities.***

NSF agrees that this recommendation has merit. NSF participation in future workshops would be focused on how the data collected would address basic science research needs and priorities. The Ocean Observatories Initiative will provide the public, science community and educators with oceanographic data to enable basic scientific research proposal submissions to NSF through the standard process. NSF is always open to receiving well-articulated science proposals

submitted to our core physical, chemical, geological, and biological oceanography programs. Proposals involving marine ecosystem research including fishes and shellfish would typically be considered within the biological oceanography program. Ocean science core program proposals undergo a competitive external review process and our current award success rates are approximately 26% when considering all proposals received. WHOI or NSF could provide you with proposal submission instructions if requested.

To facilitate direct delivery of information needs to the Northeast fishing community, the OOI Project can design and deliver a separate section of the OOI web landing page that presents the Pioneer or OOI data interests tailored to the needs of the commercial fishing community. WHOI would serve as the lead coordinator for receiving the fishing community input and OL would deliver the design, subject to the overall web design capabilities and limitations.

***Recommendation 15. Fishermen recommend that a process be established for how to deal with interactions with AUVs and Gliders. They would also recommend that scientists consider establishing a reward program for fishermen reporting and returning science equipment. (See OL answer for how AUV and Glider information will be distributed)***

***Recommendation 17. Both fishermen and scientists recommend that a committee or working group be formed to address the subject area of what happens when something goes wrong, and the liability issues connected with those situations.***

***Recommendation 18. Fishermen recommend that through the work of the committee established to address liability issues, an informal dispute settlement process be established.***

These three recommendations all have a common theme of communications with the fishing community during the deployment and operations of the OOI and specifically the Pioneer Array. Ocean Leadership is the NSF Awardee for OOI construction and initial operations and maintenance. They are responsible for public outreach and communications regarding the OOI Project and the Pioneer Array. First and foremost, the project must provide notice to mariners in compliance with Maritime law. Second, communications to support shore-side data delivery, dissemination of project status updates and non-maritime activities information must be adaptive and responsive, utilizing communications best practices.

The OOI Project will conduct maritime communication activities and interactions in a manner consistent with maritime law requirements and within the limitations imposed by federal funding requirements and Congressional approval of the OOI project. OL is funded to meet the existing State, Local and Federal regulations currently established and referenced in the NSF federal funding for the OOI project. OL does not have the funding authorization or regulatory authority to informally address liability, determine fault and resolve disputes outside of the State, Local and Federal requirements. NSF's position on this issue has been consistently communicated to the public, science community and Congress over the past 42 months. Recommendation 15 requests development of a rewards program for lost equipment. NSF plans to have phone numbers and contact information on the deployed OOI Project equipment. We will rely on satellite tracking of the equipment and the goodwill of responsible mariners and community members for the safe return of any components that may become lost.

Shore-side or non-maritime communications for the OOI Project will continue to be refined now that a complete design has been delivered. These communication mechanisms include:

- Responses to inquiries regarding the OOI via phone, internet or mail. WHOI and OL are currently responsive to these types of requests and will follow the processes described in their letter response to the workshop.
- Periodic updates to the project website with communications and notifications of OOI status. This has been and will continue to be an Ocean Leadership function and is currently on a quarterly update cycle. The OL website is the primary shore side communication tool for the project and will continue to be the source of project information. The website is [www.oceanobservatories.org](http://www.oceanobservatories.org) and it will undergo significant refinements in content and structure as the observatory matures. A subscription service to updates from OL is provided by clicking on “subscribe” at the bottom of the website.
- As needed public meetings or workshops for operations and maintenance input or information dissemination.

NSF’s Division of Ocean Sciences supports research, infrastructure, and education to advance understanding of all aspects of the global ocean, including its interactions with people and the integrated Earth system. These activities provide knowledge critical to addressing many of our nation’s most pressing challenges involving earth processes. The data collected by the Pioneer Array will support opportunities for the Commercial Fisheries Research Foundation to collaborate with the basic science research community to further our knowledge and understanding of the coastal ocean regions. We thank you for your 2011-2012 workshop leadership and look forward to the science discoveries the Pioneer Array will enable. If there are any questions regarding this correspondence, please contact me at 703.292.7591 or [jmcgover@nsf.gov](mailto:jmcgover@nsf.gov).

  
Jean McGovern  
OOI Program Director