



# NATIONAL BOATING FEDERATION



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June 3, 2004

The Honorable Norman Y. Mineta  
U. S. Department of Transportation  
400 Seventh Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary Mineta:

I am writing on behalf of the National Boating Federation's (NBF) 2,000,000 members nationwide to urge that you promptly announce a decision by the Department confirming the continuation of Loran as part of the long-term navigation system mix necessary to meet our nation's transportation safety and security goals.

As you know, other marine users and related groups, including the United States Power Squadron (USPS) have also continually expressed strong support for Loran. We are delighted that work has progressed to modernize the Loran system and improve Loran technology through a collaborative interagency working agreement between the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), even though primary responsibility for marine matters has transferred from the Department of Transportation (DOT) to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This ongoing and cooperative modernization effort, for which more than \$120 million has been invested, underscores the importance of Loran as an important national asset.

We urge you to make a prompt decision and announcement confirming the long-term continuation of Loran. It is a decision that is long-overdue and has repeatedly been promised in recent years, only to be delayed pending further evaluations, studies and reports. For our members, improved Loran can serve as a most suitable complement and important backup to satellite technology.

Three years ago, you indicated a Loran evaluation was nearing completion and a decision about Loran was anticipated by the end of 2002, yet no decision has ever been finalized. We have seen yet another DOT report, released in January 2004, entitled: *Radionavigation Systems: A Capabilities Investment Strategy*. That report states the expectation that technical studies done by the FAA and the Coast Guard on new Loran technology will validate that Loran will provide capabilities to support critical aviation, maritime, timing, and other national infrastructure requirements. We understand the FAA /USCG technical Loran evaluation has now been completed and submitted to the DOT, along with favorable cost/benefit findings resulting from a recent Loran analysis by the Volpe National Transportation Systems Center.

All of this work has provided added and convincing evidence that Loran has an essential long-term role in our nation's navigation system mix because it a proven, reliable, cost-effective multimodal backup to satellite navigation. Your strong support for Loran is warranted from any important vantage point, whether it is transportation, navigation safety, national security or the taxpayer's perspective.

On behalf of all our members, I urge you to make an announcement confirming the long-term continuation of Loran at the soonest.

Sincerely,

Earl M. Waesche