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September 16, 2003

Dr. Larry Atkinson
Chair, Fleet Improvement Committee
Old Dominion University
4600 Elkhorn Avenue
Norfolk, VA 23508

Dear Dr. Atkinson:

I would like to take this opportunity to update the Fleet Improvement Committee on the status of the *CAPE HENLOPEN Replacement Vessel*:

- Four proposals were received (out of the eight pre-qualified shipyards) on August 29th.
- Total cost was slightly higher than expected. However, proposals were competitive and pricing relatively tight for a ship construction project.
- We are currently in the 90-day shipyard evaluation process and cannot discuss precise cost details at this time.
- We have been instructed by the University of Delaware Leadership to proceed toward yard selection and contract negotiation.
- Contract signing is currently projected for November.

Though we are slightly behind on shipyard selection, the construction and delivery targets remain as originally projected.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Hawkins
Director, Marine Operations

C/c: Dr. Carolyn Thoroughgood, Dean
Dr. David Kirchman, DRVC Chair
Mr. Mike Prince, UNOLS Office
Ms. Dolly Dieter, NSF
Mr. John Freitag, ONR