

NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION  
4201 Wilson Boulevard  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22230



AUG 25 2011

OFFICE OF POLAR PROGRAMS

Dear Colleagues:

On July 28, 2011, we informed you of the need to find and engage an icebreaker that would be capable of opening the channel to McMurdo Station this coming austral summer season. At that time, we advised you that if such a vessel was not identified by mid-August, the U.S. Antarctic Program would need to implement contingency plans by mid-August.

Since our last communication, we have continued working with colleagues in the State Department, the Office of Science & Technology Policy and the Office of Management and Budget, the Coast Guard and other agencies, as well as with shipping companies world-wide with icebreaking resources suitable for breaking the channel to McMurdo Station and escorting the tanker and cargo ships.

I am pleased to report that we have entered into a letter contract for the services of the *Vladimir Ignatyuk*, a diesel-powered Russian icebreaker owned by the Murmansk Shipping Company. Some of you will recognize this ship as sister to Canada's *Terry Fox*.

This year's experience brought home the importance of increasing our contingency fuel supply at McMurdo over the next several years, partly via increased shipments and partly by reducing fuel usage. While these actions could result in delays to operational or science projects in the near term, we will make every effort to minimize disruptions.

Over the next few weeks Program and Operations staff will concentrate on analyzing resources and requirements in order to develop plans for implementing a successful austral summer season.

Your best source of information will be your NSF program manager but we will also distribute updated information when available via the USAP.GOV website.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl A. Erb".

Karl A. Erb  
Director

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