



NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION
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NSF 21-073

Dear Colleague Letter: Impacts to Antarctic Research Support at Palmer Station due to Construction of the new Pier

April 20, 2021

Dear Colleagues:

The United States Antarctic Program (USAP), operated by the Office of Polar Programs (OPP) at the National Science Foundation, will soon be replacing the pier at Palmer Station, located in the Western Antarctic Peninsula (WAP). Once completed, the new pier will significantly increase the efficiency of research and operational support at the station. The existing Palmer Station pier was constructed in 1967 and, despite careful maintenance, has now exceeded its service life. The new pier will accommodate larger vessels and improve science capacity at the station. In addition, with its greater surface area and enhanced facilities the new pier will improve safety for personnel and ships and reduce risk of mission disruption at the station.

Construction of the new pier is scheduled to occur during the 2021/2022 Antarctic season. To minimize impacts on science and operations, construction will occur within a single season. Safety considerations will prevent boating operations during pier construction; this includes local research boating as well as station re-supply by the Antarctic Research & Supply Vessel (ARSV) Laurence M. Gould (LMG). As such, Palmer Station will only support a limited number of research projects and no on-station science personnel during the 2021/2022 season. To mitigate the lack of station science support, the the Research Vessel/Ice Breaker (RV/IB) Nathaniel B. Palmer (NBP) and the LMG will support research operations in the Antarctic Peninsula and Amundsen Sea region in accordance with any 2021/2022 season COVID-19 operational constraints. We expect to return to regular science operations in the U.S. Fall of 2022, with any modifications that may be necessary due to COVID-19.

Updates related to the Palmer pier's construction will be made available via future.usap.gov and [USAP.gov](https://usap.gov), at relevant science community workshops and conferences, social media, and community listservs.

Questions related to this Dear Colleague Letter should be directed to the USAP Ocean

Projects Manager in OPP's Antarctic Infrastructure and Logistics Section Timothy McGovern
(tmcgover@nsf.gov).

Sincerely,

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