



# SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD

## ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SERVICES WORKING GROUP

### MEMORANDUM FOR THE NOAA SCIENCE ADVISORY BOARD

**FROM:** Brad Colman and Scott Glenn, Co-Chairs, Environmental Information Services Working Group (EISWG)

**SUBJECT:** 2024 Tsunami Science & Technology Advisory Panel (TSTAP) statement against a reduction in funding to the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program

**DATE:** July 19, 2024

As the Environmental Information Services Working Group (EISWG) Co-Chairs, we are pleased to provide the TSTAP Tsunami Science & Technology Advisory Panel (TSTAP) statement expressing concerns about current and potential reductions in funding to the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program (NTHMP). The EISWG has approved this report and it will be presented for SAB approval at the SAB Meeting on July 31, 2024.

The EISWG co-chairs would like to highlight two statements from the report:

**Statement #1:** *NWS informed the NTHMP partners that one-third (\$2M of \$6M) – a substantial amount – of FY24 NTHMP grant funding was being applied to begin development of a common analytical system (CAS) for the two Tsunami Warning Centers (TWCs). NOAA has referenced the 2021 TSTAP recommendations to justify applying these funds for other NWS tsunami priorities. This transfer of funds away from the NTHMP was not the intent of the TSTAP recommendations and likely creates new gaps in the end-to-end NTHMP work. In addition, proposed upgrades to the NOAA-NWS tsunami forecast and warning system will require additional support for NTHMP partners to update state, territory, and local forecast and communication procedures.*

The NOAA Tsunami Science and Technology Advisory Panel (TSTAP) has authored this report about NOAA's 2024 cut and likely future cuts to National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program (NTHMP) partner grants. A key message of this report is that TSTAP believes strongly in the value of the NTHMP grants program for preparedness and mitigation projects and that these grant funds should not be used for unification and improvements to the NOAA Tsunami Warning System (TWS). NOAA has now created new gaps in protecting the public by diverting NTHMP grant funding. A one-third reduction (\$2M of \$6M) in NWS support to the NTHMP will have a substantial negative impact on the work of the NTHMP to address end-to-end tsunami preparedness and does not support NOAA's overall mission to protect people, property, critical infrastructure, and other national interests from tsunamis.

**Statement #2:** *Three full-time NOAA staff members who have helped support the NOAA tsunami program and the NTHMP partners over the past five years have left their positions and are being replaced with new personnel at NOAA's National Weather Service (NWS). This has left the program in a vulnerable state.*

In combination, the reprogramming of NTHMP resources and recent changes in tsunami program staffing, will challenge recent successes and bring risk to the vision for this critical program. As such, the TSTAP requests that NOAA reconsider reducing NTHMP grant funding now and in the future.

As EISWG Co-chairs, we concur with these statements and look forward to the NOAA Response to the TSTAP's statement against a reduction in funding to the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program with these considerations.