NASA
National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

Washington, D.C.
20546

Reply to Attn of: EEC

October 15, 1986

Dear Colleague:

Oceanography is a recent venture for NASA, with the first oceanic microwave sensor having flown on Skylab in 1972. Since that time, ocean-related sensors have flown on several satellites, including Seasat, Nimbus-7, and Tiros launched in 1978. The enclosures, as with similar materials published two years ago, are based on results from those sensors, and are illustrative of our developing capability for observing the oceans from space.

NASA's plans for the decade include a scatterometer for launch in 1990 aboard the US Navy Remote Ocean Sensing System (NROSS); a dedicated altimeter mission, TOPEX/POSEIDON, proposed for launch in 1991 collaboratively with the French Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales; a proposed color scanner aboard a spacecraft of opportunity; and an Alaskan SAR Facility capable of receiving, processing, and archiving synthetic aperture radar (SAR) data from European and Japanese SAR-equipped satellites to be launched in 1989 and 1991, respectively.

In order to exploit the potential offered by this next generation of oceanographic sensors, we are supporting the National Science Foundation, US Navy, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration — as well as our international partners — to plan a set of complementary at-sea experiments. Three examples being organized as part of the World Climate Research Program (WCRP) are the Tropical Ocean/Global Atmosphere program, the World Ocean Circulation Experiment, and the Global Ocean Flux Study. Whether viewed as part of the WCRP, or as basic elements of the proposed International Geosphere-Biosphere Program: A Study of Global Change, these experiments will benefit not only oceanography, but they also will make fundamental contributions to earth science. In addition, the understanding gained from these experiments will assist in the design of follow-on, research and operationally oriented earth observing systems.

I would like to take this opportunity to let you know that NASA remains committed to supporting a vigorous program in oceanography and earth science.

Sincerely,

B. I. Edelson
Associate Administrator for
Space Science and Applications

Enclosures