



AMERICAN METEOROLOGICAL SOCIETY

45 BEACON STREET, BOSTON, MA 02108-3693 U.S.A.

TEL: 617-227-2425
FAX: 617-742-8718
E-MAIL: amsinfo@ametsoc.org
WEB: www.ametsoc.org

KEITH L. SEITTER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
E-MAIL: kseitter@ametsoc.org

14 June 2011

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye, Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye:

On behalf of the American Meteorological Society (AMS) and its 14,000 members, I write to express our concern that ongoing Federal funding decisions will erode the nation's environmental observing system. As is evident by the severe weather events our nation has already endured this year, including deadly tornados, flooding, and drought-fed wildfires, this observing system is critical to our security and economic well-being. Indeed, the human impact of these extreme events would have been far worse without the advance warning provided by our existing observation system of satellites, radars, and other observational networks that feed data into advanced monitoring and prediction systems.

As noted in a recent official policy statement of the American Meteorological Society¹:

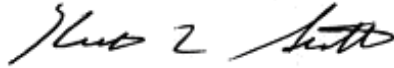
The infrastructure supporting weather, water, environmental, and climate sciences, and assessments is a critical national resource. It is essential for optimal decision-making with respect to the protection of life, mitigating losses, environmental stewardship, efficiency of weather- and climate-sensitive sectors of our economy, and national security. This infrastructure consists of observation systems; communications; high-performance computing; and data management, archiving, and access.

Funding constraints for the Federal agencies responsible for this infrastructure currently imposed and being discussed for future budgets have put the observational component of the existing system at risk, especially in terms of maintaining adequate coverage by Earth-observing satellites. A reduction in the quantity or quality of these observational datasets will degrade significantly the quality of weather forecasts that are relevant to fully one-third of the U.S. economy in one way or another.

Therefore, our national and economic security depends on adequate funding for both the Joint Polar Satellite System (JPSS) and the next generation geostationary satellites (GOES-R). Critically, funding for these satellite systems should not come at the expense of any other component of the United States' weather and climate infrastructure. AMS is especially concerned about the funding levels being discussed for Earth-observing platforms at NOAA and NASA, because cuts to those agencies would almost certainly lead to dangerous and costly reductions in our nation's capacity to predict and respond to extreme events.

Our members proudly serve this nation by providing operational environmental prediction services and scientific research, which enables society to live and work together on our dynamic planet. We strongly encourage you to sustain and enhance the observation systems that we need to provide these services effectively. We are happy to discuss any aspect of this with you further, and appreciate your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,



Dr. Keith L. Seitter
Executive Director

¹ Excerpted from “On the Infrastructure Supporting Weather, Water, Environmental, and Climate Sciences, Services, and Assessments” [Full statement available at: http://www.ametsoc.org/policy/2009infrastructure-support_amsstatement.pdf]

Letters equivalent to the one provided above were sent to the following senators and representatives:

Senator Daniel K. Inouye, Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Senator Thad Cochran, Vice Chairman, Senate Committee on Appropriations
Senator Barbara A. Mikulski, Chairman, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and Science,
Senate Appropriations Committee
Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice
and Science, Senate Appropriations Committee
Senator John D. Rockefeller, Chairman, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and
Transportation
Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Ranking Minority Member, Senate Committee on Commerce,
Science and Transportation
Senator Mark Begich, Chairman, Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries and Coast
Guard, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Senator Olympia Snowe, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oceans, Atmosphere, Fisheries
and Coast Guard, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
Representative Harold D. Rogers, Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations
Representative Norman D. Dicks, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on
Appropriations
Representative Frank Wolf, Chairman, Subcommittee Commerce, Justice and Science, House
Appropriations Committee
Representative Chaka Fattah, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice and
Science, House Appropriations Committee
Representative Ralph Hall, Chairman, House Committee on Science, Space & Technology
Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson, Ranking Minority Member, House Committee on
Science, Space & Technology
Representative Andrew Harris, Chairman, Subcommittee on Energy and Environment, House
Committee on Science, Space & Technology
Representative Brad Miller, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy and Environment,
House Committee on Science, Space & Technology