



AMERICAN METEOROLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Keith L. Seitter, Executive Director
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Ronald D. McPherson, Executive Director Emeritus
Kenneth C. Spengler, Executive Director Emeritus

May 16, 2006

The Honorable Frank Wolf
Chairman, Subcommittee on Science,
State, Justice, and Commerce
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Capitol Building, H-309
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Alan Mollohan
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Science,
State, Justice, and Commerce
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Capitol Building, H-309
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Wolf and Ranking Member Mollohan:

The American Meteorological Society (AMS) encourages Congress to address a broad array of 21st century challenges:

- provide for public health and safety in the face of natural hazards and growing vulnerability;
- ensure continued economic growth, especially in weather- and climate- sensitive sectors of the economy such as energy and agriculture;
- protect the environment and ecosystems, despite increased pollutant loadings and climate change; and
- maintain national security in a world where natural disasters, cycles of flood and drought, and environmental crises increasingly destabilize geopolitics.

The starting point for addressing these challenges in a timely and effective manner is adequate funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) programs and services — funding that ought to be determined not by historical levels, but by the much more daunting future national and international imperatives. Climate outlooks; weather forecasts; and the science, observations, modeling, services, and products are improving steadily over time, but the pace of that improvement lags the growing threat. Losses to natural hazards are increasing. Acute, highly-localized pollution episodes are on the rise. Climate change and its impacts are outpacing our efforts to mitigate and adapt.

While we cannot control natural forces, we can mitigate their negative impacts and realize their potential for benefit through improved forecasts and outlooks that stem from sustained investments in research and technology. For decades, Congress and successive administrations have provided the resources needed to maintain and improve our nation's weather and climate services. That vital support must continue in future years to keep pace with growing national needs for timely and accurate forecasts and warnings and for the comprehensive understanding of the Earth system needed for wise policy formulation.

NOAA is one of the premier science agencies in the Federal Government, providing decision makers with critically important data, products and services that promote and enhance the nation's public health and safety, economy, homeland and global security, environment, and quality of life. NOAA affects and provides important services to all Americans including weather forecasting, hurricane tracking, tsunami warnings, navigational information, fisheries

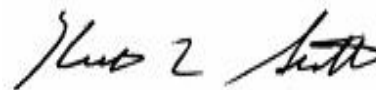
management, hazard mitigation, scientific research, and local community assistance. For example, it was NOAA — and its underlying science enterprise — that enabled the delivery of accurate and timely information regarding the impending landfall of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, a forecast that saved tens of thousands of lives.

The AMS supports federal investments to solve our urgent national problems in health, safety, economy, environment, and national security. Weather and climate services have advanced significantly over the past forty years, largely due to strategic, sustained government investments. While pressing international and national issues make the current budget environment the most difficult in years, Congress and the administration must maintain and in some cases augment key investments to ensure U.S. leadership and protect the safety and prosperity of its citizens, including: the development of an integrated ocean and atmospheric observing system; increasing research and education activities; expanding ocean conservation and management programs; and providing critical improvements in infrastructure (satellites, ships, high performance computers, facilities), and data management. It is particularly important to remember that national access to quality services depends not just on these technologies, but also on NOAA's people and the service delivery structure involving NOAA offices throughout the country. It is also important to keep in mind that the rapid growth in the provision of economically essential weather and climate services by the emergent private sector depends critically on a strong NOAA to effectively serve the nation through a successful public-private partnership.

We fully appreciate the very tight fiscal constraints facing the nation and the difficult decisions associated with allocating limited financial resources. History has shown that investments in NOAA science and service components have yielded benefits many times as valuable in the areas of providing for public health and safety, ensuring economic growth, protecting the environment, and maintaining national security. Adequate funding of these components in coming years should not, however, be at the expense of other science-based agencies such as National Aeronautics and Space Administration, National Science Foundation, or National Institute of Standards and Technology, because it is the collection of these agencies that create and develop emergent technologies and move them into operational use for the benefit of the nation. As you consider NOAA's funding for this and future years, the members of the AMS ask that you keep in mind the many benefits that NOAA programs provide.

Additional AMS views on these issues can be found in "Improved Weather and Climate Information for the Nation: An Urgent Priority for the President and the 109th Congress," which is available at: <http://www.ucar.edu/oga/pdf/transition.pdf>. Thank you for your attention in this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Keith L. Seitter
Executive Director



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The Honorable Richard C. Shelby
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice and Science
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Capitol Building, S-146A
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara A. Mikulski
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Commerce, Justice and Science
Senate Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Capitol Building, S-146A
Washington, DC 20510

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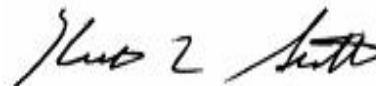
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