



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Environment Subcommittee Hearing:

*Protecting Lives and Property:
Harnessing Innovative Technologies to Enhance Weather Forecasting*

July 16th, 2025

Thank you, Chairman Franklin and Ranking Member Amo. And thank you to the witnesses for sharing your expertise with us today.

We, as in both Republicans and Democrats, have consistently worked together to ensure that we did our part in supporting NOAA and the weather enterprise. We must continue to support both the research necessary to further understand and predict our environment, and the translation of that knowledge into products and services to support communities and the economy.

On July 4th, our country just witnessed what a devastating flood can do to a community. Those families that have been affected by that catastrophic flooding event and lost loved ones continue to be in our thoughts. I also want to acknowledge and thank the first responders, emergency personnel, and other heroes who put their own lives at risk to help their neighbors during this frightening event.

This Committee has held several hearings to discuss the progress in weather research and forecasting that has been made since the passage of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017. We spoke to many experts in this field to evaluate what kinds of research and resources may be needed to further innovate and strengthen our forecasting capabilities and warning systems.

Last Congress, I was proud to join former Science Committee Chairman Frank Lucas in putting together a bill that does just that. The bill was further strengthened by many good amendments from Members of this committee on both sides. We reintroduced that bill last month, entitled the Weather Reauthorization Act of 2025. This collaborative, bipartisan bill modernizes and extends critical weather research programs, improves the communication of weather and climate information, and authorizes funding for these important programs in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. I look forward to working with Chairman Babin to advance this important bill.

In the meantime, this Administration is actively undermining the very progress and continued advancement of NOAA's weather research and forecasting capabilities that is the subject of this

hearing. Despite public statements from this Administration denying that they have made any cuts to the National Weather Service, they have, in fact, cut off some very essential services that this agency provides. Hundreds of NOAA employees being fired or bullied into leaving is causing critical services and products to be abruptly discontinued, and core experience and knowledge is being lost. They even suspended training and collaborative exercises that Weather Coordination Meteorologists conduct with local emergency managers and public safety officials.

What has been proposed for the NOAA budget by Trump and Secretary Lutnick is absolutely foolish. The July 4 disaster in central Texas should be a wake up call for all of us. More Americans will die needlessly if we let this continue. Just highlighting a few of the many horrendous proposals in this budget -- This administration seeks to decimate environmental research by terminating all of the weather, climate, and ocean laboratories and Cooperative Institutes. They intend to eliminate the NOAA Research Office and slash funding for the U.S. Weather Research and Tornado Severe Storm Research Programs. The proposal will also degrade NOAA's future critical satellite infrastructure. We just witnessed the outcry when the Defense Department's Meteorological Satellite Program abruptly stopped sharing critical weather data. Only after an urgent request from NOAA and NASA did DOD extend access to the data till the end of this month. Satellite data is critical for our weather forecasts, and maintaining NOAA's core satellite programs and continuing to advance such capabilities remains a public good.

The severe weather events we witnessed this month, from Texas to New Mexico to North Carolina, underscore the importance of supporting the National Weather Service. We support them by making sure that all the Weather Forecasting Offices and Prediction Centers across the nation are fully staffed, with access to all of the tools and training required to be successful in their jobs.

And just as important, we also support the National Weather Service by continuing to improve the lead time and accuracy of forecast modeling and communication services. And that is done through research.

I yield back.