



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Washington, D.C. 20230

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

The Honorable Ralph M. Hall
Chairman
Committee on Science, Space and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

JUN 13 2011

Dear Chairman Hall:

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) continues to place responding to your questions about NOAA's proposal to establish a Climate Service Line Office as a high priority for NOAA. Following receipt of your March 15, 2011, letter, NOAA began work to assemble a set of documents that represented a good faith effort to respond to your request to better understand NOAA's current organizational structure for climate related activities. Guided further by the May 2, 2011, phone call between you and the NOAA Administrator, NOAA produced and submitted a substantial set of material to the Committee on May 6, 2011 (see attached letter).

As a follow up to NOAA's May 6, 2011, submission, NOAA staff had the opportunity to meet with staff from your Committee on May 26, 2011, to further discuss your interests. Your staff noted that the focus of the Committee's inquiry is the March 5, 2010, memo from the NOAA Administrator, which was included in the set of documents NOAA submitted on May 6, 2011. With that focus in mind we are providing you the enclosed additional material, as the second submission in the rolling production of documents NOAA and Committee staff agreed to in their meeting. This second submission includes an initial set of: 1) emails and documents, produced from climate service related searches of the NOAA senior leadership referenced in the March 5, 2010, NOAA memo, and 2) emails and documents related to the congressionally mandated study by the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) regarding organizational options for a Climate Service in NOAA.

The enclosed documents reflect that NOAA's climate services activities fall into two major categories: 1) developing the proposal for a Climate Service Line Office to be included in NOAA's fiscal year 2012 budget request submitted to Congress for approval; and 2) improving coordination and integration of climate science and services under the existing business operations practices outlined in NOAA's Business Operation Manual¹, including matrix management, in order to continue to provide information, products and services to the Nation and achieve the climate goal and objectives outlined in NOAA's Next Generation Strategic Plan². You will see that, at times, some NOAA individuals who were engaged in these activities referred to themselves or their existing budget planning teams in shorthand, using terms such as "NCS" or "Climate Service." However, we want to reiterate that NOAA has not established or implemented a Climate Service Line Office.

¹ See *NOAA Business Operations Manual Version 6.2*. February 2011.

http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/PPI_Capabilities/Documents/BOM.pdf

² See *NOAA's Next-Generation Strategic Plan*. December 2010. <http://www.ppi.noaa.gov/ngsp.html>



As Dr. Lubchenco described in her May 6, 2011, letter to you, people around the country and the world use information about the climate to inform major decisions in such diverse areas as national defense, agriculture, and energy production. In recent decades, with advancements in our understanding of the climate, people are using information at finer geographic and time scales to make smarter choices at home and in their communities and businesses. This comes at a time when up to one-third of the U.S. gross domestic product is dependent on weather and climate.

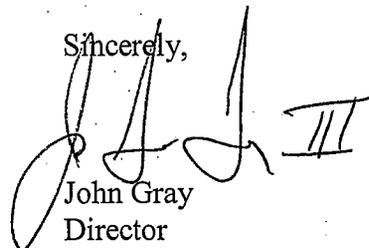
NOAA's climate information – including long-range forecasts of conditions from 2 weeks to seasons or decades out – continues to be at the forefront of this improved decision making. Our climate capabilities have significantly matured and grown in sophistication as a result of the work of the Agency's world-class scientists, managers, and external partners. Recognizing the need to respond to this rising demand, NOAA's proposed reorganization represents the culmination of many years of thought and planning by internal and external scientists and decision makers.

The budget neutral proposal comes at no additional cost to the taxpayer, and it will allow NOAA to more effectively implement the many important climate and research authorities Congress has provided, and to operate more efficiently with the funds we receive. Our proposal also maintains the highest standards of scientific integrity for all NOAA science and strategically renews the Office of Atmospheric Research's (OAR) forward-looking research agenda. In proposing to house much of OAR's climate research in the proposed Climate Service Line Office, a structure strongly endorsed by NAPA, NOAA will both be able to better transition its high quality climate science into usable services and seize upon the opportunity to refocus OAR's efforts to incubate solutions to tomorrow's long-term science challenges, integrate an agency-wide science portfolio, and drive NOAA science and technology innovation.

We are continuing to work to determine the scope of responsive documents from among the large volume of potentially responsive documents associated with all individuals listed on the March 5, 2010, memo, as requested by your staff. We are committed to providing the Committee with the rolling production of documents as agreed upon in the May 26, 2011, meeting between NOAA and Committee staff.

Included in this production are deliberative and pre-decisional documents, which we are producing as a discretionary matter. Therefore, we respectfully request that you notify us prior to further release of the enclosed materials. If you have further questions, please contact me at (202) 482-2981.

Sincerely,



John Gray
Director

Enclosures



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere
Washington, D.C. 20230

MAY -6 2011

The Honorable Ralph M. Hall
Chairman
Committee on Science, Space and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Thank you for your letter dated March 15, 2011, regarding your interest in understanding the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) current organizational structure for climate activities. I appreciate our recent discussions on NOAA's climate capabilities and proposal for a Climate Service Line Office during our December 2010 meeting and my fiscal year (FY) 2012 budget testimony before your committee.

While I realize that many people think of the very long term – centuries or more – when they hear the word 'climate,' the term refers to any time in the future beyond two weeks. NOAA's weather forecasts cover the short-term (less than two weeks); and our climate information covers anything beyond two weeks. NOAA has been providing information about both weather and climate for more than a century.

Hence, 'climate services' are not new. People around the country and the world use information about the climate to inform major decisions in such diverse areas as national defense, agriculture, and energy production. In recent decades, with advancements in our understanding of the climate, people are using information at finer geographic and time scales to make smarter choices at home and in their communities and businesses. This comes at a time when up to one-third of the U.S. gross domestic product is dependent on weather and climate.

NOAA's climate information – including long-range forecasts of conditions from two weeks to seasons or decades out – continues to be at the forefront of this improved decision making. Our climate capabilities have significantly matured and grown in sophistication as a result of the work of the agency's world-class scientists, managers, and external partners. For example, NOAA's climate forecasts, from seasonal precipitation and drought outlooks to weekly on-the-ground U.S. Drought Monitor assessments, are helping firefighters in Texas to prepare for and respond to a record wildfire season. NOAA's information is also being used by the U.S. home building industry, which estimates savings of over \$300 million per year in construction costs alone from using just one of NOAA's climate services.



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THE ADMINISTRATOR



Americans who have come to depend on this long-range information are now demanding more data and increasingly complex products that, in turn, require advanced scientific study. In order to better organize NOAA to respond to these needs, experts have proposed creating a formal "climate service" within the agency. This concept first surfaced in the early 1970s and later gained prominence in the George W. Bush Administration. NOAA and external groups have been engaged in efforts ever since to further develop this idea and improve climate science and services.

Before advancing this proposal, NOAA staff worked for nearly a decade, and continue to work, in a cross-Line Office "goal team" to better coordinate the climate capabilities distributed across the agency's five Line Offices and achieve the long-term climate science and service goals of NOAA's strategic plan. At the same time, NOAA's expert scientists and managers from across the agency, as well as external experts, analyzed our current organizational structure and evaluated options for further improvement. Chief among these external advisers was a National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) expert panel that, at Congress' request, completed a study of options for a Climate Service in NOAA. The unanimous conclusion of internal and external scientists and decision makers was that establishing a single management structure for the agency's core climate capabilities is required if the agency is to rise to meet the Nation's growing need for increasingly sophisticated information.

I believe strongly that our proposed reorganization, reflecting this management structure and submitted as part of NOAA's FY 2012 budget request to Congress, is the right solution. It is budget neutral and comes at no additional cost to the taxpayer. In fact, by consolidating NOAA's climate activities in one Line Office we will be able to operate more efficiently with the funds we receive, provide the public with a single point of access to NOAA's climate data and tools, and better support the growth of the emerging private sector climate services industry. Together, this will allow NOAA to more effectively respond to the Nation's increasing demands for climate information.

Our proposal also maintains the highest standards of scientific integrity for all NOAA science and strategically renews the Office of Atmospheric Research's (OAR) forward-looking research agenda. In proposing to house much of OAR's climate research in the proposed Climate Service Line Office, a structure strongly endorsed by NAPA, NOAA will both be able to better transition its high quality climate science into usable services and seize upon the opportunity to refocus OAR's efforts to incubate solutions to tomorrow's long-term science challenges, integrate an agency-wide science portfolio, and drive NOAA science and technology innovation. Of critical importance is the fact that none of NOAA's climate or other research capabilities are diminished by this proposed reorganization, and we do not anticipate any marked change to the balance of internal vs. extramural funding, pending appropriations.

Enclosed you will find a set of documents compiled by my staff to assist your understanding of: 1) NOAA's current organizational structure for climate-related activities, and 2) the planning we have undertaken to develop our reorganization proposal. NOAA has not made changes to its organizational structure to establish or implement a Climate Service Line Office in the absence of Congressional approval.

I appreciate your ongoing interest and support of NOAA, and would be happy to meet with you at your convenience to further discuss these issues. If you have any questions or would like to meet, please contact John Gray, Director of NOAA's Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs at (202) 482-4981.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane Lubchenco". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "L".

Jane Lubchenco, PhD.
Under Secretary of Commerce
for Oceans and Atmosphere

Enclosures