

OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

H.R. 1561, the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2015
Full Committee Markup

March 25, 2015

Thank you Chairman Smith. Today we are marking up the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act.

Mr. Chairman, extreme weather events are a fact of life that we live with across our country. From my home state of Texas, all the way to Maine, hurricanes and tropical storms annually batter our coasts.

Likewise, the central portions of our country, from Texas to Illinois are the most tornado prone areas in the entire world. And I don't want to leave my west coast colleagues out of this miserable list. It seems like every year we hear of terrible landslides occurring in California due to torrential rains.

America has some of the most diverse and dangerous weather events of any country on earth. To help our citizens cope with this, we need to have the very best weather forecasting system in the world.

This bill represents one very positive step to improving the American weather forecasting system.

I want to take a moment to acknowledge that getting to where we are today was not easy. For over a year, Members and staff have worked hard to negotiate a bipartisan bill. I want to especially recognize the efforts of Environment Subcommittee Chairman Jim Bridenstine and Ranking Member Suzanne Bonamici. Their leadership and commitment to getting a good bill has really driven this process forward. I also want to thank Chairman Smith and Representative Lucas, the bill sponsor, for their collaboration.

The efforts to make this bill responsive to the outside community should also be commended.

I think significant improvements have been made to the bill since last Congress, and I sincerely hope that the outside community recognizes this and supports the progress that has been made.

This is a good bill that will save lives and make our communities safer. I urge support for the legislation, and I yield back.