

**Opening Statement of
The Honorable Ralph Hall (TX-4), Ranking Member**

Committee on Science and Technology

*FY2011 Budget Hearing for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the
Environmental Protection Agency*

March 10, 2010

Thank you Mr. Chairman, and thank you for holding this hearing today on the President's 2011 budget requests for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency. I would like to welcome our witnesses here today and I look forward to hearing their testimony.

In the last three weeks, we have held budget hearings on NASA, the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), and the Department of Energy. In each of these hearings, the Administration has proposed radical changes to long-standing science and technology policies with very little detail or clear direction forward and with billions of dollars at stake. We have seen this with NASA and human space flight, as well as DOE with Yucca Mountain. The two agencies before us today follow that trend, and I am concerned about several of the proposed changes in their budgets.

NOAA has recently made announcements that move the agency in dramatically new directions. As the final arbiter of this interagency project, OSTP announced their decision to dissolve the National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite System, or NPOESS, thereby severing a 16-year effort between NOAA, NASA and the Department of Defense to create a single next-generation system of weather satellites. The decision to split the program into two parts—with NOAA and NASA responsible for the afternoon orbit and DoD responsible for the morning orbit—comes as a bit of a surprise. It is even more surprising that this decision was reflected in NOAA's budget request but was not reflected in DoD's request. DoD has not announced whether it plans to use legacy technology or build a new satellite for their orbit. This decision comes without a full transition plan, a detailed cost estimate, or an idea of how a joint ground system will impact data coming from potentially two different satellite systems. This Committee has been engaged from the beginning on this issue, and it will need to exercise substantial oversight before we can approve of moving forward.

I am also concerned about the recent announcement regarding the creation of a NOAA Climate Service. NOAA's announcement indicated that the agency would be creating a new line office and reorganizing research by moving labs, data centers and observing networks into this new office. I am not supportive of this change, and as Ranking Member, I believe that this Committee should have an opportunity to examine this proposal in detail. I do not think it is appropriate for a change of this magnitude to be decided on solely by the Appropriations Committee through a reprogramming request. I am also uncomfortable with the idea that this budget requests \$47 million under the Oceanic and Atmospheric Research budget line when this funding is intended to go to the new line office.

Finally, I am troubled that the EPA has recently made some landmark decisions that could dramatically alter the U.S. economy. The endangerment finding, which states that carbon dioxide endangers public health and welfare, that was finalized last December, if allowed to stand, could wreak havoc throughout the economy. Last December, after the Agency's announcement, I introduced House Resolution 954 which expresses the sense of the House of Representatives regarding the scientific protocols, data collection methods, and peer review standards for climate change research which are necessary to preclude future infringements of the public trust.

After the release of the emails from the Climate Research Unit at the University of East Anglia, and several admissions by the IPCC regarding its conclusions, our trust in what the experts have called the "gold standard" of climate science is severely shaken. The fact that the Administrator did not conduct her own extensive review of the scientific literature as is required for adjustments to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards raises a red flag. It makes us question why such a thorough review was not undertaken; why similar protocols were not followed for a decision of this magnitude. There are many questions we have about this decision, not the least of which is its validity.

Decisions made without the appropriate or, for that matter, legally required justification, often result in obvious and not so obvious unintended consequences. When determining how to spend taxpayer dollars, one expects the Administration would provide detailed analysis, information, and transparency. I look forward to listening to our witnesses and learning the basis for which many of these decisions were made. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman.