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**Statement of Environment Subcommittee Chairman Chris Stewart (R-Utah)
Hearing on “Restoring U.S. Leadership in Weather Forecasting part 2”**

Chairman Stewart: Good morning and welcome to this morning’s Environment Subcommittee hearing entitled “Restoring U.S. Leadership in Weather Forecasting Part 2.” I’d like to thank our excellent witnesses for being here today. I’d also like to welcome the subcommittee’s new vice chairman, the gentleman from Oklahoma, Mr. Bridenstine.

This hearing is the second installment of a process we began last month to discuss legislation to enhance weather forecasting through targeted research investments at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Severe weather routinely affects large portions of the United States, and this year is no different. As we discussed at part 1 of this hearing, the United States needs a world-class weather prediction system that effectively safeguards American lives and property.

Today we are discussing legislation that was recently introduced by vice chairman Bridenstine, a bill that I am proud to cosponsor. The Weather Forecasting Improvement Act of 2013 prioritizes forward-looking weather research, improves procurement of observing system data from space, air, and land, and opens up NOAA’s process to encourage private sector weather solutions. The legislation is a down payment to upgrade our weather prediction system that has fallen behind international standards.

Let me be clear about the goal of this bill: It makes the protection of lives and property through improved forecasting the top priority for NOAA. The bill does not micromanage the Agency, but instead expands resources available for achieving this objective. I appreciate the wise counsel of the witnesses testifying today and I think we can all agree that improved weather prediction is a goal worth pursuing. We should not let the perfect be the enemy of the good, and in these tight fiscal times it is absolutely vital that our most important research programs are authorized by Congress and thus more protected from future budgetary constraints.

At this time I would like to yield the remainder of my time to the vice chairman from Oklahoma, Mr. Bridenstine, to discuss his legislation, and the positive impacts it would have to protect his state and this nation from life threatening severe weather.

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