

Opening Statement
Rep. Bob Inglis (R-SC), Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Environment
Committee on Science and Technology
MARKUP
Committee Print, *The National Climate Service Act of 2009*

May 13, 2009

Good morning and thank you for holding this hearing, Mr. Chairman.

The Committee Print before us today addresses the important need for a robust and comprehensive source of climate information. A wide variety of decision makers from the local to global level are faced with long term planning decisions and an uncertain climate future. A National Climate Service can help meet the information needs of these decision makers and help our communities and businesses make appropriate investment decisions.

As we heard at last week's hearing, climate service capabilities exist in a number of federal agencies, at the state government level, and in academia. An effective and efficient National Climate Service will properly coordinate these efforts and resources, avoid duplicative work, and support the needs of the user community. In order to do this, NOAA will have to reach out to a number of other federal and state agencies and reconcile these efforts with the robust set of work NOAA does at the global, national, and regional level.

Ideally, the National Climate Service will also identify and respond to the particular needs of the user community. Many of these needs can be met with a federal focus. Weather prediction, observing, monitoring, and modeling capability at the federal level creates a reliable and homogenous body of information for the entire nation. At the same time, many climate information needs will be extremely localized, requiring a narrow focus on things like regional precipitation, stream flow, or temperature data. An effective climate service would be flexible enough to respond to users with the appropriate level of information.

Unfortunately, this bill falls short in both regards. Instead of pushing for interagency and government-wide participation, this bill assumes that NOAA has both the capacity and the resources to handle the National Climate Service on its own. The testimony from last week's hearing and the current resource questions at NOAA do not support this conclusion. The language also fails to acknowledge the crucial work of State Climatologists in identifying and responding to user needs. Devolving a certain amount of responsibility to regional and state entities would create a far more agile and responsive National Climate Service than the bill we're looking at now.

The National Climate Service should serve a critical role in enabling our communities and businesses to plan for an uncertain climate future, and I look forward to improving this bill to meet those needs. Thank you again, Mr. Chairman.