



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY

Opening Statement

Ranking Member Zoe Lofgren (D-CA)

Full Committee Markup

H.R. 6093, the Weather Act Reauthorization of 2023

November 8, 2023

Thank you, Chairman Lucas. Today the Committee is considering just one bill, H.R. 6093, the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2023. In 2017, the Science Committee developed and enacted, on a bipartisan basis, the first comprehensive weather policy legislation in more than two decades. That legislation helped accelerate innovation in weather forecasting tools and products and strengthen collaboration and cooperation among all stakeholders in the weather enterprise. The legislation before us today continues to advance policy to strengthen the weather enterprise and ensure that NOAA has the tools, the capabilities, and the workforce to continue to save lives and protect property as climate change drives more frequent and more severe extreme weather events.

Every one of the many important provisions in this legislation was developed thoughtfully, with input and feedback from NOAA and external stakeholders. I will highlight a few, and I know many of our colleagues, in offering amendments, will have the opportunity to call attention to other important parts of this legislation.

The Weather Reauthorization Act strengthens research, observations, forecasting, and public communications related to extreme weather events, including hurricanes, tornadoes, tsunamis, coastal flooding and storm surge. Also on this list are atmospheric rivers, which hit California in unprecedented number and ferocity last winter. They dumped 32 trillion gallons of water in the state in a matter of weeks and tragically resulted in 21 deaths. H.R. 6093 requires the establishment of an Atmospheric Rivers Forecast Improvement program to focus on this growing threat to life and property in the west.

H.R. 6093 will also help drive the development of novel sensor technologies on diverse observation platforms, expand computational resources to aid forecasters, and strengthen sub-seasonal to seasonal forecasting capabilities. Importantly, the legislation will increase NOAA's investment in data assimilation through the creation of a program to test, advance, and implement data assimilation methods, a need we heard repeated several times from experts in our hearings this year. As part of this program, NOAA will direct the creation of a new university-based data assimilation consortium to address critical research challenges and foster a data assimilation workforce.

Finally, this bill finds the right balance in expanding NOAA's partnership with the growing commercial weather sector while maintaining a backbone of publicly owned observational capabilities and a capable workforce necessary to avoid any disruption in NOAA's forecasting capabilities.

The National Weather Service's mission is the protection of life and property and the enhancement of the national economy through forecasts and warnings. This bill supports that mission. I look forward to working with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure that all of the activities authorized in H.R. 6093 are funded in the coming years.

I want to thank Chairman Lucas for his continued partnership in carrying out the important work of this Committee, as reflected in this good bipartisan legislation, and thank the committee staff on both sides of the aisle for their months of hard work and collaboration. I support H.R. 6093 and I urge all of my colleagues to support it.

I yield back.