



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

Opening Statement

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Subcommittee on Environment:
A Review of the NOAA Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Request
April 30, 2019

Thank you, Chair Fletcher. I would also like to welcome Dr. Jacobs and thank him for being here today to testify on NOAA's Fiscal Year 2020 budget request.

For decades, NOAA's research and services have played a critical role in protecting American lives through accurate weather forecasting and climate prediction, improving our environmental knowledge and stewardship, and supporting a thriving United States economy. It seems obvious to say, but the NOAA budget should reflect its mission and ensure NOAA can fulfill its obligations to the American people.

NOAA's mission is "to understand and predict changes in climate, weather, oceans and coasts; to share that knowledge and information with others; and to conserve and manage coastal and marine ecosystems and resources."

Yet NOAA's budget request for Fiscal Year 2020 is \$1 billion lower than its current budget, which is an 18% reduction. These cuts are felt across nearly every program and activity across the agency. This budget would also terminate approximately 547 civilian positions. How will NOAA deliver on its mission with these drastic cuts?

We don't have time to go into every detail, so I'd like to use part of my time to highlight some of my greatest concerns.

The first is with NOAA's delivery on climate research. Climate change is real and happening right now. Rising temperatures and sea levels, and changes in ocean chemistry and ecosystems, pose a real threat to public health. These climate impacts also affect the management of our fisheries and coasts, and the overall resiliency of our communities to extreme weather events. NOAA's activities, tools, and services are central to our ability to understand, adapt to, and mitigate the impacts of a changing climate.

As climate and severe weather events increase in frequency and intensity, so do the costs to human lives and the economy. In 2017, a record-breaking year, the U.S. had 16 weather and climate events that each cost at least \$1 billion for a total cost of over \$300 billion and 362 fatalities. This budget proposes to cut almost \$500 million from its climate laboratories and cooperative institutes and nearly dismantles NOAA's Climate Program Office. How will this

impact the ability of communities across the United States to prepare for and respond to climate change and severe weather?

It also proposes to eliminate the agency's funding for the National Climate Assessments. These Assessments represent years of work and extensive review. In our first Full Committee hearing on the "State of Climate Science," we heard from experts who contributed to the Fourth National Climate Assessment. What does it mean when the leading federal agency studying the climate drops out of the main federal report on climate change? I look forward to hearing from Dr. Jacobs how NOAA intends to continue working on this Congressionally mandated report without any dedicated funding for it.

I recognize that Dr. Jacobs was given a tough budget proposal from the Administration and had to make some difficult decisions. But we need to think about the lives at risk, and the potential economic and environmental harm, of such a reduced budget.

Thank you, Madam Chair, and I yield back the balance of my time.