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

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Subcommittee on Environment Hearing:
The Future of Forecasting: Building a Stronger U.S. Weather Enterprise
May 16, 2019

Thank you, Chair Fletcher. I would also like to thank our witnesses for joining us this afternoon.

The U.S. Weather Enterprise is comprised of academic, private, and public sectors. Our federally funded suite of environmental observations and weather and climate forecast models are complemented by a robust private sector. These private partners distribute National Weather Service watches, warnings, and advisories to ensure the widest dissemination of this information in order to adequately protect the public. The academic sector conducts cutting-edge research that feeds into our weather models and forecasts. They also train the next generation of scientists and engineers for the workforce of the Weather Enterprise.

Despite the strength and unique nature of our Weather Enterprise, our country is falling behind in weather forecasting.

Two years ago, Congress passed the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act, which included, among other things, a focus on regaining U.S. leadership in weather modeling and forecasting. I hope our panel will touch upon the extent to which this legislation has moved the Weather Enterprise towards achieving this goal, and what remains to be done.

In order to keep up with other countries and be prepared for the weather risks associated with a changing climate, we need to optimize our investments in weather forecasting. It is vital that all sectors of the Weather Enterprise effectively coordinate to ensure efficiency and innovation. Setting clear, long-term, enterprise-wide goals can prevent duplication or gaps in capability.

The challenge of how to improve our weather models and forecasts will not be solved by the federal government alone. NOAA and the Weather Service must find ways to capitalize on the rapid development of new science, technology, observational capabilities, and high-performance computing both internally and within the private and academic sectors. Successfully making these innovative approaches operational is a key step to achieving this goal. Today's hearing will be a good starting point to understand the best path forward.

I look forward to hearing from our expert witness panel on how best to address this challenge and learn where we should prioritize federal investments in the Weather Enterprise to build upon the leadership and contributions of all three sectors. Thank you, and I yield back the balance of my time.