

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY

2321 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6301

(202) 225-6375  
[www.science.house.gov](http://www.science.house.gov)

March 6, 2020

The Honorable Neil Jacobs  
Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction and Acting  
Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)  
1401 Constitution Ave NW, Room 5128  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Acting Under Secretary Jacobs,

We write to you regarding the upcoming release of the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Earth Prediction Innovation Center (EPIC). On November 20, 2019, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment, held a hearing titled, *A Task of EPIC Proportions: Reclaiming U.S. Leadership in Weather Modeling and Prediction*.<sup>1</sup> During this hearing, you testified that the you expected the RFP to be released in January or February 2020. Based on testimony from that hearing, we would like to convey to you our expectations for the RFP before its public announcement.

At the November 20 EPIC hearing, witnesses testified that in order for EPIC to be successful it must be independent, autonomous, and should encourage participation and collaboration from all members of the weather community, including the public, private, and academic sectors. Indeed, you testified that EPIC must be external to NOAA, and that the RFP will determine its location and governance structure.

When finalizing the RFP, we hope that NOAA will consider recommendations from the hearing and ensure that the RFP appropriately positions EPIC to fulfill its legislative mandate of creating a truly community-driven modeling system that leverages the broader weather enterprise.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, we believe that the RFP should result in a single award being issued to ensure EPIC is implemented in a unified manner that prevents fragmentation of the program.

---

<sup>1</sup> *A Task of Epic Proportions: Reclaiming U.S. Leadership in Weather Modeling and Prediction: Hearing Before the Subcomm. on Environment, H. Comm. on Sci., Space, and Tech.*, 116th Cong. (Nov. 20, 2019), available at <https://science.house.gov/hearings/a-task-of-epic-proportions-reclaiming-us-leadership-in-weather-modeling-and-prediction>.

<sup>2</sup> Section 4 of the National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act of 2018, P.L. 115-423

The future of U.S. leadership in numerical weather prediction depends on the success of EPIC. It is therefore extremely important that the RFP solicit the best proposals from across the weather enterprise.

We respectfully ask that you please provide us with an update on the estimated timing of the release of the RFP by March 20, 2020. Please contact Priyanka Hooghan at (202) 225-6375 on the Majority staff and Brent Blevins at (202) 225-6371 on the Minority staff to provide the update.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Eddie Bernice Johnson  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Science, Space, and  
Technology



Frank Lucas  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Science, Space, and  
Technology

cc:

Dr. Louis W. Uccellini, Assistant Administrator for Weather Services, NOAA  
Craig McLean, Acting Chief Scientist, Assistant Administrator for Oceanic and Atmospheric  
Research, NOAA