

OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Miller

March 6, 2012

Hearing on the FY 2013 Budget Request for NOAA and EPA
Subcommittee on Energy and Environment

Thank you, Chairman Harris. I also wish to welcome the witnesses, Dr. Lubchenco from NOAA, and later, Mr. Kadeli here from the EPA. Thank you both for being here today.

We are likely to spend much of this hearing discussing two subjects these agencies are now tackling. First, understanding the environmental and human health effects of a massive expansion in oil and gas drilling; and, second, understanding the nature of our changing climate and what effects it will have.

These are critical research areas that EPA and NOAA are uniquely qualified to undertake. However, a discussion limited to hydraulic fracturing and climate change ignores the broad scope of the scientific activities these agencies pursue, and the critical role they play in our lives every day.

From forecasting the weather to protecting public health by ensuring cleaner air and water, these roles are too easily disregarded, and unfairly demonized, in the fog of partisan politics. We must not lose sight of the contribution that decades of science and technology research have provided to our economy and public health.

While today we will see areas of agreement and disagreement on the appropriate resources and directions for NOAA and EPA, I think that we should all agree that good policy begins with good science, and that good science is not free.

We must recognize the value of these programs, and work together to protect every American's right to cleaner air and water and a healthier environment.

I understand the need to set priorities in times of fiscal restraint, and commend the Administration for doing so, there are aspects of each budget that concern me.

Despite the challenging economic times, it is unwise to sacrifice services that the public relies on, such as weather forecasting and warning capabilities. Nor should we undermine America's future by failing to invest in the next generation workforce of scientists. We can be fiscally responsible while still making the necessary investments to keep our country and environment healthy and the American economy competitive.

It is hard to avoid clichés in politics, but I try. There is a phrase that is widely-used because it is frequently apt: we are eating our seed corn. That is my great concern about our budget for research.

Dr. Lubchenco and Mr. Kadelic, as you testify today, please explain how the proposed cuts and increases will affect your agencies' ability to protect the health and well-being of our citizens and communities, and how the President's request will move our nation's science enterprise in the right direction.

I look forward to working with you all in the months ahead. I yield back.