

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

Ranking Member Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)  
Subcommittee on Environment  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Subcommittee on Environment Hearing  
*“An Overview of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Budget Request for  
Fiscal Year 2015”*

April 30, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for holding this morning’s hearing to examine the President’s budget request for NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. I’d like to welcome back Dr. Sullivan and congratulate her on being named one of Time Magazine’s 100 most influential people. (Those are some very nice words from Senator John Glenn). As we find ourselves facing one of the biggest environmental challenges of our time—climate change—we’re in need of your national leadership and advocacy on this issue and I thank you very much for being here. I’m looking forward to today’s discussion about NOAA’s priorities in the proposed budget.

NOAA is a critically important agency tasked with helping our communities, economy, and ecosystems remain healthy and resilient in the face of an ever-shifting environment. NOAA conducts state of the art research to understand and predict changes in weather and climate, as well as in the oceans and along our coasts. This science is used to create products and services that inform decision-making by a diverse set of stakeholders.

NOAA helps my constituents along the coast of Oregon decide when it’s safe to go out fishing; they aid my constituents in Yamhill County as they grow the grapes that become Oregon’s world-famous pinot noir; and they assist people in Oregon, and across the country in planning for, and responding to, extreme weather and climate events like heavy precipitation, flooding, and the devastating storms impacting the south and Midwest. And NOAA helps all of our constituents in similar ways.

I am pleased that the President’s budget request recognizes the importance of NOAA and gives the agency a prominent role in the Administration’s efforts to prepare the United States for the impacts of climate change.

The budget makes critical investments in NOAA’s observational infrastructure, which includes environmental satellites that not only serve as the foundation for our weather forecasts, but also provide critical information about the opening of the Arctic Circle to maritime commerce and energy development.

The proposed budget also recognizes that the demand for climate data and other information, especially at the regional level, is growing. It seeks to address this need for regional information and tools by expanding the National Integrated Drought Information System (or NIDIS) to include, among other areas, the Pacific Northwest; by improving our understanding of ocean acidification, which will help the shellfish industry adapt and the fishing industry prepare; and by operationalizing ecological forecasting of harmful algal blooms that pose a threat to human health.

Overall, I am pleased with the President's budget request for NOAA, but I do have some concerns that I would like to briefly mention. Specifically, although the Joint Polar Satellite System or JPSS seems to be on track – and in fact, it was recently announced that the first of five instruments that will fly on JPSS-1 is ready for installation – I remain concerned about the risk associated with a likely gap in polar data and NOAA's plans to mitigate the impact of this gap. I hope to gain a better understanding today of the agency's efforts to implement a mitigation plan.

Additionally, as you know, off the coast of Oregon lies the Cascadia Subduction Zone. When – unfortunately, not if - another earthquake occurs on this fault, it will trigger a massive tsunami with potentially catastrophic results. I am sure you can understand my concern with the proposed elimination of education and awareness grants through the National Tsunami Hazard Mitigation Program, grants that are designed to help communicate threats to vulnerable communities and assist in the development of response strategies. I'd like to hear from Dr. Sullivan about how NOAA is working to increase resiliency in communities threatened by tsunamis, and I look forward to working with you as we develop legislation to reauthorize the Tsunami Warning and Education Act.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for holding this hearing and I look forward to working with you and our colleagues to ensure that NOAA has the resources it needs to fulfill its critical mission to protect lives and property and to enable commerce through science, service, and stewardship.

Dr. Sullivan, thank you again for being here today and for your service to the Nation.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.