

## **Opening Statement**

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)

Committee on Science, Space, & Technology  
Subcommittee on the Environment

*“An Overview of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Budget Request for  
Fiscal Year 2017”*

March 16, 2016

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I would also like to welcome Dr. Sullivan to the Committee and thank her for being here today to testify on NOAA’s fiscal year 2017 budget request.

As many of us know, NOAA’s research and services play a critical role in weather forecasting, enhancing our understanding of the environment and, ultimately in helping ensure that the United States’ economy remains strong. A key aspect of those efforts is the work that NOAA does to help us understand and address the potential impacts associated with climate change.

Rising temperatures and sea levels and changes in ocean chemistry and ecosystems pose a real threat to public health, the management of our fisheries and coasts, and the overall resiliency of our communities to extreme weather events. NOAA’s programs and activities and the tools and information they provide are central to our ability to understand, adapt to, and mitigate the impacts of a changing climate.

The proposed budget request contains a number of programs and activities that will expand NOAA’s capabilities and increase the resiliency of communities, but I’d like to comment on one new initiative that I find especially promising.

NOAA is proposing to develop and operate the Nation’s first integrated water prediction capability—meaning that NOAA wants to develop the ability to deliver street-level water forecasts to more than 100 million Americans. This level of detail and coverage could significantly improve our capacity to prepare for and respond to floods, droughts, and water-quality hazards. Unfortunately, those of us from Texas have seen our fair share of both flooding and droughts over the last few years and I’m certain that our local emergency managers and decision makers would have welcomed this capability.

Overall, I am happy to see that the President’s budget request for NOAA emphasizes the agency’s critical roles in improving weather forecasts and in helping the United States act on climate change.

I look forward to discussing these efforts, as well as the other important initiatives and programs that are contained in NOAA’s proposed budget.

Before, I yield back I’d like to address the Majority’s ongoing investigation of NOAA’s climate scientists. It is clear to me that this investigation is unfounded and that it is being driven by

ideology and other agendas. The Majority has asserted, without offering any credible evidence, that NOAA and the climate science community, at-large, are part of some grand conspiracy to falsify data in support of the significant role humans play in climate change. However, the overwhelming body of scientific evidence, across many different fields has shown that this is not the case.

There may be an ongoing scientific debate about the rate of warming over the last 15 years, but that does not change the basic facts according to science: the world is warming, the warming is caused mostly by humans, and there are significant risks associated with this warming. I hope my friends and colleagues on the other side of the aisle can move past their efforts to create scientific controversy where it doesn't exist and instead focus on finding solutions to addressing the threat of climate change.

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