

November 5, 2004

The Honorable Fritz Hollings
Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, State and the Judiciary Subcommittee
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

FACSIMILE SENT TO: 202-224-4293

Dear Senator Hollings:

On behalf of the Weather Coalition, a group of academic, nonprofit and industry members (list attached) involved in advancing the fields of weather research and forecasting, we write to urge you to provide the maximum support possible in conference for the FY 2005 budget of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), with particular emphasis on NOAA research programs and the National Weather Service (NWS).

As the lead federal agency dealing with weather issues, a vibrant NOAA is vital to the well being of the nation and the interests of the Weather Coalition. We understand that budget pressures may have forced the House to recommend dramatically reduced funding for NOAA, but the House numbers, if funded, will cause vital services to the nation to be diminished or eliminated. Negotiations during the upcoming conference are therefore crucial. **We urge you to adopt the Senate language on NOAA, which provides \$4.14 billion for the agency as a whole, \$479.3 million for the Office of Oceanographic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), \$807.3 million for the National Weather Service (NWS), and \$912.8 million for the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service (NESDIS).**

Beyond the funding levels, **we also urge that you retain the Senate language stating the following:**

The Committee has included bill language allowing the same flexibilities accorded to NASA in the promotion of its space programs to be extended to NOAA in the promotion of its oceanic, atmospheric, and space programs. The Commerce Department's Office of General Counsel regularly contests NOAA's ability to partner with industry and educational groups in the same manner as NASA does as a standard means of doing business. The Committee recommendation should allow NOAA programs to be treated in a similar and fair manner.

The Weather Coalition wholeheartedly supports this sentiment. Effective collaboration with external partners in NOAA's "weather, water, and climate enterprise" (wording

from the NOAA Policy on Partnerships) is critical if U.S. citizens are to realize the maximum benefit from their investment in weather services. The on-going legal bickering on this topic, as suggested in the above language, has discouraged NOAA from taking advantage of the wealth of expertise available among the private sector and at our nation's private businesses, colleges, universities, and research institutes. This language will help to improve this environment and improve NOAA's ability to accomplish its mission on behalf of our nation.

We thank you for your attention to these requests and for your continued leadership on research issues.

Sincerely,

Ray J. Ban
Executive Vice President
The Weather Channel

John T. Snow
Director, Oklahoma Weather Center
and Dean, College of Geosciences

Enclosure

C: Lila Helms