

June 1, 2005

The Honorable Vernon Ehlers
Chairman
Subcommittee on Environment, Standards, and Technology
Committee on Science
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

FACSIMILE SENT: 202-225-5144

Dear Chairman Ehlers:

On behalf of the Weather Coalition, we provide comments regarding the United States Tsunami Warning and Education Act, H.R. 1674. The Coalition is a diverse group of representatives (list attached) from industry, academia, and science and education consortia. We are committed to improving the country's weather prediction and warning capabilities, and believe that tsunami forecast, warning, and education programs -- all critical to human safety -- can enhance the nation's overall monitoring and prediction infrastructure.

The Weather Coalition strongly supports this important legislation and we look forward to working with the Congress and the Executive Branch to ensure its effective implementation once it has been enacted into law. In particular, we endorse the monitoring component of the bill. The proposed program offers an opportunity to create truly integrated, multi-purpose monitoring systems in the ocean and coastal environments. Multi-purpose systems are not just cost effective -- they also promote good interdisciplinary science, providing researchers with instruments capable of measuring a host of markers at once and so capturing the interactions between ocean waves and wind speed, direction, and air temperature and pressure. Scientists need such multi-purpose platforms to understand Earth's coupled ocean-atmosphere system and so develop the knowledge necessary to obtain the nine important societal benefits areas identified in the U.S. Integrated Earth Observation System Strategic Plan. This is just what the Tsunami Warning and Education Act promises.

We support also the bill's directive to improve tsunami education and outreach activities, which are a crucial complement to enhanced monitoring systems. To save lives and property, technology and research must be combined with a greater public understanding of the tsunami threat and knowledge of how to properly respond. We suggest that Sec. 4.b(1) the proposed legislation be adjusted to read "(1) recommend specific actions and priorities for the allocation of the funds appropriated for carrying out the program under this section;" Experience suggests that a "coordinating committee" of the type described is best suited to help set the programmatic priorities.

We are pleased to see that the bill requires NOAA to collaborate with external partners in its tsunami research program. Such cooperation, which leverages both federal dollars and

scientific talent, can serve as a model for future partnerships between researchers in the government, academic, and private sectors.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important bill. Thank you also for your continued effective support of the scientific enterprise of this country. Please let us know if we can be of any additional assistance as H.R. 1674 moves through the legislative process.

Sincerely,

Raymond J. Ban
Executive Vice President
The Weather Channel®

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

Co-Chairs of the Weather Coalition