



THE WEATHER  
COALITION

Testimony Regarding the FY08 Budget Request  
Submitted 26 April 2007 by

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**Ray Ban, co-chair**  
*Executive Vice President*  
The Weather Channel

**John Snow, co-chair**  
*Director*  
Oklahoma Weather Center

**Richard Anthes**  
*President*  
University Corporation for  
Atmospheric Research

**Phillip Ardanuy**  
*Director, Remote Sensing  
Applications*  
Raytheon Company

**Eugene Bierly**  
*Senior Scientist*  
American Geophysical Union

**Carl Bjerkaas**  
*Vice President for Operations,  
Weather, Water and Climate Services*  
Science Applications International  
Corporation

**Walter Dabberdt**  
*Director of Strategic Research*  
Vaisala Inc.

**Timothy Killeen**  
*Director*  
National Center for Atmospheric  
Research

**Neal Lane**  
*Professor and Senior Fellow*  
Rice University

**Frank Nutter**  
*President*  
Reinsurance Association  
of America

**Len Pietrafesa**  
*Director*  
Office of External Affairs North  
Carolina State University

**Maria Pirone**  
*Vice President for Product  
Development*  
Atmospheric and Environmental  
Research (AER) Inc.

**Timothy Reinhold**  
*Vice President for Engineering*  
Institute for Business & Home Safety

**David Whelan**  
*Vice President, General Manager and  
Deputy to the President*  
Boeing Phantom Works

**John Snow, Dean, The University of Oklahoma**  
**Ray Ban, Vice President, The Weather Channel**  
**Co-Chairs, Weather Coalition**

**Subcommittee on Science, State, Justice, and Commerce, and Related Agencies**  
**Committee on Appropriations, U.S. House of Representatives**

On behalf of the **Weather Coalition**, we submit this written testimony for the record of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Science, State, Justice, and Commerce, and Related Agencies. The Weather Coalition brings together representatives of industry, academia, and scientific and professional associations to support initiatives that advance U.S. weather observation, prediction, and warning capabilities. Special consideration is given to national initiatives that expand research and development collaborations among industry, academia, and government agencies; support the establishment of a robust Earth observing system; and support the infrastructure, including human and computing resources, necessary to use global observations effectively for research and operations.

The Weather Coalition is especially concerned with the appropriations for the **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**, although other agencies including NSF and NASA provide important contributions to the weather enterprise. NOAA's contributions to the nation's safety, economy, and environment more than justify increased investment in its research and education programs, its personnel and related scientific support facilities. The Weather Coalition urges the Subcommittee to focus on the following three important functional areas for NOAA appropriations:

**Hurricane Research.** NOAA has a key role to play in implementing the recommendations of the January 2007 National Science Board (NSB) report on hurricane research. In cooperation with the National Science Foundation and other agencies, NOAA would support the basic research through its facilities and data sources, and be responsible for the transition of research findings into operational forecasting. This requires funding at levels higher, in some cases significantly higher, than the President's request for NOAA. We note that authorizing legislation has been introduced by Senator Martinez that would provide clear guidance to NOAA and other agencies that is based on the NSB recommendations.

**Observing Systems.** NOAA maintains a world-class satellite and surface-based observing system without which weather research and operational forecasts simply could not function. It is imperative that the various elements of this system, from hurricane hunter aircraft, to wind profiler radar, and the NIDIS program, be funded at a level that allows for maintenance and necessary upgrades.

**Satellite Programs.** While by no means an issue for NOAA only, the nation's satellite program is at great risk. The recent National Research Council *Decadal Survey* contains recommendations that the Weather Coalition strongly endorses to ensure that we maintain our data gathering capabilities for weather research and forecasting. It is also essential that implementing these recommendations not be accomplished at the expense of other NOAA program areas.

Given these three functional priority areas and our overarching interest in NOAA, the Weather Coalition offers the following appropriations recommendations for key programmatic areas. Overall, we strongly support an appropriation of \$4.5 billion for NOAA in FY08 – a level recommended by the Senate for the past two fiscal years and endorsed by the House Oceans Caucus and the Friends of NOAA Coalition. The FY08 request is \$3.8 billion, a decrease of more than \$96.0 million from the FY06 enacted level. We believe that under-funding NOAA is a false economy that will degrade critical weather and climate services all too often taken for granted. ***For NOAA to address all areas of concern and priority that have been identified by Congress and that are listed below, and to restore core funding that has decreased in recent years, we urge the Committee to fund NOAA at \$4.5 billion for FY08 and to do so while maintaining vital support for other portions of the Subcommittee's research and development portfolio.***

**National Weather Service (NWS).** The FY08 President's request for NWS contains modest growth above the FY07 request and joint resolution. This amount will modestly help to ease demoralizing pressures put on NWS operations staff in recent years. Unfortunately, several important programs continue to fare poorly. The *Space Environment Center (SEC)* provides space weather and solar radiation warnings for, among other things, modern telecommunications and electricity grid operations. Yet the FY08 request is only \$6.2 million, down from \$7.3 million in FY07, remarkably low considering the economic sectors affected. The *NOAA Profiler Network (NPN)* gathers vertical wind data of proven value for weather prediction and severe storm warnings. We appreciate the stated commitment to beginning the NPN conversions needed to avoid a near complete shutdown by 2010, but note that the FY08 request would leave 90 percent of the conversions to be completed in only two years. Additional funds in the PAC account for NPN may provide a more realistic completion schedule. The *US Weather Research Program (USWRP)* request reduces funding to multi-national cooperative research efforts by \$1.5 million, in particular pulling out of the THORPEX Pacific-Asia Regional Campaign (T-PARC) designed to improve pacific coast winter storm forecasts. This would renege on U.S. commitments and slow forecast improvements. ***We urge the Committee to increase the President's FY08 request of \$903.5 million for the NWS by the amount necessary, approximately \$3.5 million to fund SEC, NPN, and THORPEX at reasonable levels.***

**Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR).** The OAR FY08 budget request is \$368.8 million, a decrease of over \$10.0 million from the FY06 enacted level. The FY08 request will allow modest increases for implementation of the National Integrated Drought Information System (NDIS) and improving hurricane intensity research, extremely important and timely progress that we welcome. The climate research

programs of OAR, including the competitive grants program within Climate and Global Change, have been combined into a new account titled, Competitive Research Program. Since the overwhelming percentage of the programs funded within this account are operated by NOAA and not open to competition, this new title is misleading. However, many of the programs within this account are certainly of importance to the atmospheric sciences community, in particular the extramural, merit-based grants program which could address shortfalls in critical areas such as the need for improved ocean circulation observations and research as well as the completion of the ARGO array. ***We urge the Committee to provide at least the President's FY06 enacted level of \$379.6 million for OAR in FY08 in order to allow for a robust and truly competitive extramural climate research program.***

**National Environmental Satellite, Data and Information Service (NESDIS).**

NESDIS is responsible for managing all aspects of NOAA's remotely gathered environmental data that form the basis for environmental research meeting the needs of policy makers and users. Continued support for the Global Earth Observation System of Systems (GEOSS) is appreciated, but the overall NESDIS request is down as is the request for the National Data Centers which are of critical importance in making data available to researchers and policy makers. Our community is well aware of the significant budget problems that the National Polar-orbiting Operational Environmental Satellite (NPOESS) will surely cause as it becomes operational. The NPOESS program is essential to maintaining and upgrading a comprehensive satellite and surface observational system, 40 percent of which, according to a recent NRC report, is quickly coming to the end of its functional life. At a time when the nation should be fixing the NPOESS problem, we do not understand how NESDIS could be slated for a budget cut. ***We urge the Committee to protect other NOAA research and operational programs that serve this nation well, while addressing the NPOESS issue and giving NESDIS the resources it needs in FY08 to keep this country ahead of all others in our ability to gather environmental data that are essential for policy decisions, the management of resources, and the health of our economy.***

On behalf of the Weather Coalition, we thank the Committee for your stewardship of the nation's participation in and support for the entire weather enterprise.



## Members of the Weather Coalition

### Private Sector

AccuWeather, Inc.

Atmospheric and Environmental  
Research (AER), Inc.

The Boeing Company

Meteorlogix, LLC

Planetary Data, Incorporated

Raytheon Company

RS Information Systems, Inc. (RSIS)

Science Applications International Corp.  
(SAIC)

Vaisala Inc.

The Weather Channel®

WeatherBank, Inc.

WeatherBug®

### Associations and Consortia

American Geophysical Union

Institute for Business and Home Safety

National Association of State Universities  
and Land-Grant Colleges

Reinsurance Association of America

University Corporation for Atmospheric  
Research (UCAR)

### Universities

University of Alabama at Huntsville

University of Albany, SUNY

University of Arizona

Arizona State University

University of California at Los Angeles

Cornell University

Atmospheric Science Program

Florida State University

Department of Meteorology

University of Hawaii

School of Ocean and Earth Sciences & Technology

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Department of Atmospheric Sciences

Iowa State University

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Dept. of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences

University of Missouri – Columbia

Department of Atmospheric Sciences

North Carolina State University

College of Mathematical & Physical Sciences

University of Oklahoma

National Weather Center

Pennsylvania State University

Department of Meteorology

Purdue University

Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences

Saint Louis University

Department of Earth and Atmospheric Science

Cooperative Institute for Precipitation Systems

University of Texas at Austin

Department of Geological Sciences

University of Washington

Department of Atmospheric Sciences