

## **OPENING STATEMENT**

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-TX)  
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

*“Advancing Commercial Weather Data: Collaborative Efforts to Improve Forecasts, Part II”  
Environment Subcommittee Hearing*

July 14, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I’d also like to welcome and thank Vice Admiral Brown for appearing before us today.

This hearing is a necessary follow up to a productive hearing we had in May with members of the weather community. I am pleased that we will be able to continue the discussion with NOAA today.

Data gathered by NOAA satellites feed global weather models that are critical to protect lives and property through accurate and timely weather forecasts and warnings. Americans have always appreciated the value of timely and accurate weather forecasts. Now, at a time when climate change impacts are being felt by more and more people, the importance of NOAA’s weather satellites cannot be overstated.

What we learned from our hearing in May was simple: with respect to new sources of commercial data, four things must remain intact: We must continue to meet our international obligations; we must preserve the ideal of free and open access to weather data; we must ensure the data are useful and needed; and we must ensure that data purchased from commercial entities do not degrade our ability to make accurate forecasts. These are important to ensuring we have an approach that provides long-term benefits to this country and the world.

As I said before, observing the Earth and its changes is a truly global enterprise and we all benefit from deep and long-lasting international engagement and data sharing. Anything that has the potential to harm such arrangements must be dealt with from the beginning.

To that end, I am pleased to learn that NOAA is taking a thoughtful approach to expanding their use of commercial weather data, mindful of the risks and open to its benefits. I look forward to discussing this approach more today, and to be certain, in the coming months and years.

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