COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY
Lamar Smith, Chairman

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Statement of Chairman Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.)
Leading the Way: Examining Advances in Environmental Technologies

Chairman Biggs: Good Morning and welcome to today's Environment Subcommittee hearing, entitled "Leading the Way: Examining Advances in Environmental Technologies." I'd like to first thank our excellent witnesses for being here today.

For a hearing such as this one, there are many different avenues we could explore, but certainly one of undeniable importance is atmospheric monitoring. Without accurate atmospheric monitoring, we simply have no good way to predict the weather and, in turn, no ability to ensure that citizens are kept out of harm's way when severe weather arises. In the federal government, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, is tasked with issuing forecasts that inform millions of Americans each day. To make these forecasts, NOAA also spends billions of dollars on environmental observation and data collection.

I certainly have no doubt that NOAA plays a vital role in atmospheric monitoring and weather forecasting. But one of the questions we need to explore in this hearing is whether it makes sense for NOAA to provide all weather data. In the 21st century, the landscape has changed. The federal government isn't the only game in town, nor, I would argue, should it be.

Partners in the private sector can—and should—use their advanced and innovative technologies to better our weather predictions. Unfortunately, NOAA has been reluctant to seek the help it needs. In the face of degraded forecasting capabilities and aging satellite systems, NOAA has continued to solve all of its problems alone, thereby wasting time and government resources. Instead of continuing to think inside the "government-only" box, NOAA needs to look to private partners who are ready and willing to help.

Earlier this year, President Trump signed into law the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act,a comprehensive bill to increase our weather forecasting capabilities to better protect lives and property. I want to commend Chairman Lamar Smith for his leadership on this bill, as well as the bill's original sponsor, Vice-Chairman Frank Lucas.

What I like most about this bill is that it compels NOAA to innovate. For far too long we have relied on outmoded government technologies and systems. Thankfully, the weather bill dictates that NOAA must partner with the growing private sector to test

and validate its data in order to enhance our nation's forecasting capabilities. It is my hope that the agency will take full advantage of this opportunity. Switching gears slightly, we will also hear today about innovative technologies deployed in the oceans and how they can significantly influence a number of areas of our lives. As ocean researchers engage in a wide variety of tasks, from collecting data that feeds into our weather models to taking ocean measurements that are used to keep commercial shippers safe, these men and women are increasingly using cutting-edge science and technology.

By partnering with our commercial sector, we can decrease government costs and ensure that data streams continue to flow. As President Trump considers new leadership at NOAA, I hope that he will select an Administrator who is willing to seriously consider the benefits of private innovation.

I look forward to learning more today about some of the technologies that will lead the way to a better and smarter future.

I yield back.

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