



COMMITTEE ON
SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

**Opening Statement of Energy Subcommittee Ranking Member Roger Marshall
Environment Subcommittee Hearing: A Review of the NOAA Fiscal Year 2020
Budget Request**

April 30, 2019

Thank you, Chairwoman Fletcher, for holding this hearing today. It is important that we, as Members of Congress, remember it is the responsibility of Congress to vet budget requests, hear from the relevant agency leaders, and make the final decision on funding levels.

I also want to thank Dr. Neil Jacobs for being here today and for his continued service. Coming from the private sector, Dr. Jacobs brings a unique and valuable perspective to NOAA. On top of that, he has graciously taken on the responsibility of being the acting head of NOAA, performing the duties of Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

NOAA has a wide-ranging mission from fisheries management to atmospheric observation. Their products and services have a tremendous economic impact and affect more than one-third of America's gross domestic product.

As we've heard, the president's budget request for NOAA is \$5.4 billion, an 18% decrease from last year's enacted funding. Like all other agencies and departments, NOAA was forced to make tough choices, but the budget request reflects an attempt to be more efficient in its delivery of services in a constrained budgetary environment.

One area I am pleased to see prioritized is NOAA's research in improving forecasting. America's leadership has slipped in severe weather forecasting and European weather models routinely predict America's weather better than we can. Critical weather data is a lifeline for many of my constituents that make their living in the agriculture industry.

This spring, NOAA's National Severe Storms Laboratory will join with several partners in the Environmental Profiling and Initiation of Convection, or EPIC, field project. I am particularly interested to hear how this project, authorized by this Committee last Congress and supported in the president's budget proposal, could have an impact on agriculture and production.

I do have a modest concern about the growth of NOAA's satellite division, the National Environmental Satellite Data Information Services, or NESDIS. At \$1.4 billion, or roughly 33% of NOAA's total R&D budget, it is the largest and highest funded area. Not too long ago, in 2008, the satellite budget came in at under a billion dollars. Let me say, I do think this increase is warranted as NESDIS provides critical data and services, but we must ensure the office is equipped to handle this booming growth and use all resources in the most efficient way.

NOAA is a mission-oriented agency, and this Committee supports these core priorities. We face fiscal constraints that force us to make difficult choices about our science and technology resources. I believe that this Committee, regardless of political affiliation, should always support NOAA's desire to emphasize protecting life and property.

As I mentioned before, the president's budget proposal is just that, a budget proposal. It's ultimately up to Congress to decide at what level NOAA is funded. The testimony today will help the Committee be more informed about NOAA's work and why the Administration made certain decisions.

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