



COMMITTEE ON

**SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY**

REPUBLICANS Frank Lucas, Ranking Member

## **Opening Statement of Ranking Member Frank Lucas**

Environment Subcommittee Hearing: Working Towards Climate Equity: the Case for a  
Federal Climate Service

April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021

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Thank you, Chairwoman Sherrill and Chairwoman Johnson, for bringing together this excellent panel and hearing. I look forward to seeing the productive work of this subcommittee as we move further into the 117th Congress.

I also want to take a moment and recognize the new Ranking Member of the Environment Subcommittee, Rep. Stephanie Bice. Like me, she is an Oklahoman who has seen extreme weather events up close and personal. Therefore, she recognizes the critical role of advanced weather prediction and forecasting – something this Committee has long prioritized. I have no doubt she will be a great voice for Oklahoma and the entire U.S. weather enterprise.

And speaking of the U.S. weather enterprise, today's hearing is partially focused on two bills that have the potential to update the data and information we collect regarding weather events. The PRECIP and FLOODS Acts amend the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 – legislation I introduced that was later signed into law. While I welcome next steps to build off the life-saving policies in the Weather Act, I caution against inflating this to establishing a federalized climate service.

An important pillar of the Weather Act was directing NOAA to partner with the private sector for weather data collection used in its forecasts. It's because of the Weather Act that NOAA currently has a clear vision and flexibility when it comes to acquiring weather and climate data. Isolating these efforts to a new, duplicative service only serves to create more red tape and hurdles to our budding weather industry.

It's also important to note that NOAA is currently a climate service, providing information and research to prepare for and adapt to climate variability and change. This is primarily done through their Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA) program and Regional Climate Centers, both of which are focused on community level information and risk.

So before we rush to create another office, I want to hear from our expert panel on what is currently being provided by the federal government when it comes to climate risk and

weather. And if there are deficiencies or gaps, we are here to help and make sure community needs are being met, hopefully through existing channels.

We have an obligation to provide our citizens the most accurate information on climate and weather events so that they can make informed decisions for their own well-being. I believe that is best done by maximizing our resources through partnerships with the private sector and academic institutions.

Thank you Madam Chair and I yield back my time.