



Opening Statement of Chairman Frank Lucas

Environment Subcommittee Hearing
Reauthorizing the Weather Act: Data and Innovation for Predictions

March 28, 2023

I want to thank the gentleman from Ohio, Mr. Miller, for holding today's hearing, as well as welcome him to the role of Subcommittee Chairman. Being a farmer, working with livestock, and living in tornado alley, the Science Committee's work on weather and climate is very important to me. I'm confident you and Ranking Member Ross will do great things in this area this Congress.

When I introduced the Weather Act in 2017, it was desperately needed because there hadn't been an update to weather policy in over two decades. But what I didn't know was the almost instant impact it would have in putting the United States back at the table when it comes to global leadership in forecasting.

But while the Weather Act had an immediate positive impact, we still have work to do if we want to once again be the most accurate and trusted source of forecasting in the world.

That's why as Chairman of the Committee, I am prioritizing the reauthorization of the Weather Act this Congress. Some of the programs will expire at the end of FY 23, while other programs will continue without any updates.

As we write new legislation, we plan to examine both categories-- ensuring all of NOAA's work is modern, flexible, and at the forefront of accurate and timely weather modeling and forecasting.

The impacts of weather are far too important to not strive for the very best. Protecting life and property, helping first responders anticipate extreme weather events, and ensuring that farmers and ranchers know when to plant crops are only a few of the reasons having the most accurate weather forecasts is invaluable.

And we can only have accurate weather forecasts if we continue to invest in researching weather patterns and utilizing the tremendous innovation and data the private sector can offer.

Before the Weather Act was signed into law, I was told countless times that commercial weather data wasn't viable – that no private company could provide the quality and quantity of information NOAA needs for their operational forecasts. Flash forward to this year, NOAA is going to invest \$27 million on either purchasing data or demonstrating its use in forecasts. That's quite the success story and a testament to the innovation of American businesses.

I'm immensely proud of the progress NOAA and the private sector have made to help each other on this topic. As we look to reauthorize the Weather Act, I will push to continue this growth

and expand the options and resources NOAA has to incorporate private sources of data into their operational weather models and forecasts.

Today's hearing is important because it allows us to pinpoint the types of data and innovations NOAA doesn't need to duplicate, but can immediately utilize, to advance their mission of protecting lives and property. There are plenty of examples out there, and today's witnesses represent just a small sample of the community working in this field.

I thank our witnesses for sharing their expertise with us and I look forward to a productive discussion. Thank you and I yield back Mr. Chairman.