



Opening Statement of Environment Subcommittee Chairman Max Miller

Environment Subcommittee Hearing
Reauthorizing the Weather Act: Users of Weather Data and Areas for Improvement by Sector

June 6, 2023

I want to welcome everybody to this morning's hearing, Reauthorizing the Weather Act: Users of Weather Data and Areas for Improvement by Sector. This is the Environment Subcommittee's second hearing this Congress on reauthorizing the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017, an important effort for the Committee at large.

Today's hearing continues our examination of U.S. weather policy and how best to update the crucial work started by the Weather Act six years ago. In March, we had the privilege of hearing from innovators from the commercial sector on the advancements they have made in collecting weather data.

Today, we will hear from witnesses who utilize all this raw weather data to inform the public about imminent storms, what the weather is going to be like days from now, and what conditions we can expect over the course of an entire season.

So it's easy to see that weather data doesn't just help determine the day's clothing. It enhances our national economy by assisting long term decision making and it helps protect lives and property. It should go without saying there are serious economic and humanitarian implications to not being able to predict weather correctly or precisely, and we cannot afford to let the United States be in such a position.

From my conversations with farmers back home in Ohio, I know that seasonal weather predictions are vital to American agriculture. Without accurate predictions in this sector, seasonal planting and harvesting is put at major risk.

As we will hear today, regional data isn't enough for subseasonal to seasonal forecasting. Accurate long-term prediction requires knowledge of weather patterns around the world, such as El Nino or La Nina.

The purpose of today's hearing is to get an idea of how our witnesses utilize both federal and private data to achieve these accurate predictions. And we'll hear how that data improves our short-term forecasting and our ability to protect the public from deadly weather events.

Whether the data comes from NOAA, state services, or commercial providers, we must ensure that all tools at our disposal are used to make the public aware of extreme weather conditions.

Just last week, the Atlantic hurricane season officially kicked off, with NOAA predicting one to four hurricanes will be classified as a major hurricane.

And while this prediction is a “near-normal” season, our goal every year should be to prepare the public in a way that no lives are lost as a result of these events.

Through innovation to improve the accuracy and timeliness of weather models, as well as public awareness, we can save lives and property.

This hearing, and ultimately the Weather Act Reauthorization, will identify actionable items NOAA can pursue to build trust and education in weather forecasting products. When an EF-4 tornado or a Category 3 hurricane is bearing down on U.S. citizens, there should be no doubt on what the best course of action is.

Additionally, by working together and increasing partnerships between NOAA and the commercial sector, the “users” of weather data will be better equipped to strengthen both short- and long-term weather predictions, benefitting all Americans across all sectors.

I want to thank all of our witnesses for being here. I look forward to each of your testimonies.