



U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON  
**SCIENCE, SPACE, & TECHNOLOGY**

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## Opening Statement

**Ranking Member Deborah Ross (D-NC)**

Environment Subcommittee Hearing:  
*Winning in Weather: U.S. Competitiveness in Forecasting and Modeling*

March 6, 2024

Thank you, Chairman Miller, for holding this important hearing, as extreme weather increasingly impacts the lives of the American people; and thank you to our witnesses for sharing your time and expertise with us today.

Accurate weather forecasts and warnings are essential to the protection of American lives, property, and commerce. Americans rely on dependable and accessible weather information to make important decisions every single day. Timely and accurate weather prediction is especially important in the face of extreme weather events. According to NOAA, last year, the U.S. experienced a record number of individual weather and climate disasters that each caused over one billion dollars in damage.

Climate change is causing an increase in the occurrence and severity of extreme weather events in the United States. Forty years ago, these billion-dollar disasters occurred once every four months. Today, they occur about once every three weeks. In my home state of North Carolina, the severity and frequency of extreme precipitation events has been increasing over the past few decades and is only expected to worsen.

The dangers and damage associated with severe storms cannot be stopped entirely, but they can be mitigated, including by providing impacted communities with appropriate warnings. To that end, it is of critical importance to ensure that our weather forecasting and communication abilities are of the highest possible quality to protect American lives.

The importance of partnerships and collaboration between our government, academic, and industry partners cannot be understated. The integration of high-quality data collection with cutting-edge weather prediction technologies and fundamental science forms the backbone of reliable weather forecasting in this country, and this is only achieved through the collaboration of the U.S. Weather Enterprise.

Collaboration within the government is also important. There is expertise and weather-relevant research being carried out across our government. The Interagency Council on Advancing Meteorological Services, or ICAMS, that was born out of this committee's work in the Weather Act of 2017, seeks to advance U.S. weather forecasting capabilities by synthesizing the efforts of multiple government agencies along with private-public partnerships. This Committee has heard from several experts, including our North Carolina State Climatologist, that these types of

collaborative efforts are essential to improving weather forecasting and warnings in the United States.

One major hurdle to improving our nation's forecasting system is a lack of computing resources available for NOAA to support operational forecasts and data dissemination. Last year, I co-sponsored the Advanced Weather Model Computing Development Act, a bipartisan bill introduced by Chairman Miller that passed the House. This important legislation enables NOAA to leverage the Department of Energy's high performance computational resources and collaborate on research to improve weather and climate modeling.

While the refinement of accurate weather forecasts is highly important, we must also consider the unique needs of various end-users across the United States. This is as much a social science challenge as a data or modeling challenge. The integration of timely, accurate weather information with effective and accessible communication is essential to our goal of protecting American lives and property.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses about how Congress can continue to support NOAA, other government agencies, academia, and industry in improving the nation's weather forecasting and warnings capabilities.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.