



Opening Statement of Chairman Brian Babin

Energy Subcommittee Hearing

A Review of the President's Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Request for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

April 28, 2026

Good morning. Thank you to our Subcommittee Chairman, Mr. Franklin, for presiding over this important hearing, and thank you, Administrator Jacobs, for being here today.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is a unique agency that sits at the intersection of science, operations, and regulations. From daily forecasts, severe storm warnings, and Earth monitoring, NOAA is on the frontlines of protecting Americans by providing essential information needed to take preventive measures against life-threatening weather events. The products and services NOAA provides to support fisheries, coastal restoration, and marine commerce impact more than one-third of our gross domestic product.

Since becoming Chairman of this Committee, we have held numerous hearings focused on NOAA, from ocean technologies and deep-sea mining to weather forecasting and the importance of weather satellites to our national security.

Last September, we passed the Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2025, clarifying the Committee's priorities for NOAA's weather, monitoring, and science activities. We are closely following the Senate's movements on this legislation, and I am encouraged to see that the language in these two bills is not far apart.

The FY27 budget request is remarkably similar to the FY26 proposal. The enacted levels in the FY26 appropriations package signaled that Congress did not support the proposed direction for NOAA. The Appropriations Committee is marking up its bill tomorrow, and it will likely reflect the same position.

While I appreciate the work the Administrator has done on this budget, it is time to work together to find common ground.

NOAA's science activities are at the core of its success, and I am keenly aware of the challenges of transitioning research to operations. That's why Congress must ensure that NOAA's reorganization preserves critical research capabilities and does not dilute operational effectiveness. NOAA's research activities are essential to its mission of protecting life and property.

NOAA does not have the budget of some larger agencies, so it needs focused operational offices to provide the products and services that are vital to this country's safety and economic prosperity.

I am pleased to see that the budget request included robust support for the National Weather Service. Ensuring the National Weather Service is funded and fully staffed has been one of my top priorities since becoming Chairman. However, I question the proposal to eliminate research grants related to streamflow and rainfall.

These grants support improving precipitation forecasts, linking atmospheric and hydrologic models, reducing errors in extreme events such as flash floods and atmospheric rivers, and helping develop flash flood guidance and other flood risk products. After the catastrophic events in Kerr County last July 4, I am particularly sensitive to efforts to improve flash flood watches, warnings, and decision support products that inform timely evacuations. The National Weather Service performed well in forecasting those events last summer, and I am concerned that eliminating these grants would stymie future improvements. Let us not forget that NOAA's primary mission is to protect lives and property. I do not believe this budget request meets the President's expectations for that core mission.

Again, I want to thank the Administrator for being here to discuss with the Committee what NOAA's priorities should be, and I hope we can find a workable path forward that best serves the American people.

I yield back the balance of my time.