

## **Opening Statement By Chairman Brian Baird**

Good morning and welcome to today's hearing on Developing a National Climate Service. Today we will discuss the need for climate services, the type of services being delivered, and options for meeting the increased demand for climate information.

Climate affects all of us everyday in communities across the country. As our ability to understand and recognize climate cycles and patterns has grown, so has the demand for more climate information. This Committee passed legislation in the 107th Congress authored by Representative Hall to expand climate services by authorizing the National Integrated Drought Information Service or NIDIS.

Droughts have taken an increasing toll on individuals, natural resources, and businesses in recent years and, these impacts have not been confined to the western U.S. The Southeastern U.S. has experienced persistent drought conditions that still have not been completely alleviated in all areas. The severe shortage of water drove power plants to temporarily shut down, created financial hardships for recreational businesses, and loss in crop yields for farmers.

Without some ability to predict the intensity and duration of these climatic events, state and local governments cannot develop plans to respond to them. That is why we need climate services.

There are many examples where climate predictions have been useful in making important decisions.

In my part of the country, data on snow pack provides critical information to decision makers and water managers about the likely availability of water through the spring and summer months.

The long term data records that we have acquired through years of monitoring the weather indicate the climate is changing. Whether you believe this is due to greenhouse gases or due to natural long term shifts in climate, we need to understand this phenomenon and adapt to it. Therefore, it is in our best interest to structure a service that will utilize our expertise to deliver information that will not only support us nationally, but at the regional and local scale where adaptation and response plans can best be implemented.

Today we will hear from witnesses who deliver climate services and from those who use them. I look forward to hearing their recommendations for refining and expanding

climate services to better address the needs of communities, businesses and individuals for climate information that will reduce their vulnerability to weather and climate events.

I also look forward to hearing from the Administrator of NOAA, Dr. Lubchenco, about the Administration's plans for improving the delivery of climate services to the country.

We cannot control the weather and climate, but we can prepare for it and adapt to it if we know what we are facing.

With that, I look forward to the testimony we are going to receive today. I want to thank all of our witnesses for participating in this important hearing. I now recognize our distinguished Ranking Member Mr. Inglis for his opening remarks.