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Text of H.R. 2407: National Climate Service Act of 2009

This version: Introduced in House. This is the original text of the bill as it was written by its sponsor and submitted to the House for consideration. This is the latest version of the bill available on this website.

HR 2407 IH

111th CONGRESS

1st Session

H. R. 2407

To establish a National Climate Service at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

May 14, 2009

Mr. GORDON of Tennessee introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Science and Technology

A BILL

To establish a National Climate Service at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the 'National Climate Service Act of 2009'.

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

The purpose of this Act is to establish a National Climate Service within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to--

- (1) advance understanding of climate variability and change at the global, national, and regional levels;

(2) provide forecasts, warnings, and other information to the public on variability and change in weather and climate that affect geographic areas, natural resources, infrastructure, economic sectors, and communities; and

(3) support development of adaptation and response plans by Federal agencies, State, local, and tribal governments, the private sector, and the public.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **ADVISORY COMMITTEE**- The term 'Advisory Committee' means the Climate Service Advisory Committee established under section 5.

(2) **DIRECTOR**- The term 'Director' means the Director of the Climate Service Office.

(3) **REPRESENTATIVE**- The term 'representative' means an individual who is not a full-time or part-time employee of the Federal Government and who is appointed to an advisory committee to represent the views of an entity or entities outside the Federal Government.

(4) **SPECIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE**- The term 'Special Government Employee' has the same meaning as in [section 202\(a\) of title 18, United States Code](#).

(5) **UNDER SECRETARY**- The term 'Under Secretary' means the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

SEC. 4. NATIONAL CLIMATE SERVICE.

(a) In General- The Under Secretary, building upon the resources of the National Weather Service and other weather and climate programs in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, shall establish the National Climate Service.

(b) Climate Service Office- The Under Secretary shall establish a Climate Service Office. The Climate Service Office shall--

(1) coordinate programs at the

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to ensure the timely production and distribution of data and information on national, regional, and local climate variability and change over all time scales relevant for planning and response, including intraseasonal, interannual, decadal, and multidecadal time periods;

(2) ensure exchange of information between the research and operational offices at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to identify research needs for improving climate services and ensure the timely and orderly transition of research findings, improved technologies, models, and other tools to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's operations;

(3) ensure operational quality control of all National Climate Service products including a transparent and open accounting of all the assumptions built into the global, national, regional, and local weather and climate computer models upon which such climate services and products are based;

(4) ensure a continuous level of high-quality data collected through a national observation and monitoring infrastructure by performing regular maintenance and verification, and periodic upgrades;

(5) serve as liaison to and exchange information with other Federal agencies that provide climate services in order to--

(A) ensure the timely dissemination of information on weather and climate produced by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to other Federal agencies;

(B) ensure that data and information collected by other Federal agencies relevant to improving climate services are made available to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;

(C) facilitate the development and delivery of climate services to relevant stakeholders; and

(D) obtain information from other Federal agencies to improve the development and dissemination by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of information on climate and weather to other Federal agencies for the development of climate service products by those agencies;

(6) ensure cooperation and collaboration, as appropriate, of the National Climate Service with State, local, and tribal governments, academic and nonprofit research organizations, and private sector entities, including weather information providers and other stakeholders; and

(7) ensure exchange of data, information, and research with the United States Global Change Research Program to support the development of assessments required under the Global Change Research Act of 1990 ([15 U.S.C. 2921 et seq.](#)).

(c) National Climate Service-

(1) IN GENERAL- The Under Secretary shall operate the National Climate Service through a national center, the Climate Service Office, and a network of regional and local facilities, including the established regional and local offices of the National Weather Service, 6 Regional Climate Centers, the offices of the Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments program, the National Integrated Drought Information System, and any other National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-supported regional and local entities, as appropriate.

(2) REGIONAL CLIMATE CENTERS PROGRAM- The Under Secretary shall maintain a network of 6 Regional Climate Centers to work cooperatively with the offices of State climatologists to--

(A) collect and exchange data and information needed to characterize, understand, and forecast regional and local weather and climate;

(B) facilitate collection and exchange of data and information between the States and

Federal Government on weather and climate in conjunction with the National Climatic Data Center;

(C) support research and observations;

(D) obtain input on stakeholder needs for weather and climate information and products; and

(E) support State and local adaptation and response planning.

(3) REGIONAL INTEGRATED SCIENCES AND ASSESSMENTS PROGRAM-

The Under Secretary shall maintain a network of offices as part of the Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments Program. Such offices shall engage in cooperative research, development, and demonstration projects with the academic community on climate products, technologies, models, and other tools to improve understanding and forecasting of regional and local climate variability and change and the effects on economic activities, natural resources, and water availability, and other effects on communities, to facilitate development of regional and local adaptation plans to respond to climate variability and change, and any other needed research identified by the Under Secretary or the Advisory Committee.

(4) OTHER OFFICES- In carrying out the functions of the National Climate Service, the Under Secretary shall utilize the assets and expertise of--

(A) the National Weather Service to--

(i) deliver operational weather and climate forecasts, warnings, products, and information through the National Climate Services Division, Local Weather Forecast Offices, Weather Service Offices, and River Forecast Centers; and

(ii) develop climate forecast models and tools through the National Centers for Environmental

Prediction;

(B) the National Environmental Satellite, Data, and Information Service to provide data services and support for product development and operations through the National Climatic Data Center and the Regional Climate Centers;

(C) the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research to--

(i) provide research on product development;

(ii) improve weather and climate forecast models;

(iii) provide new technologies and methods of observation; and

(iv) oversee the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration supported research performed by the Joint Cooperative Institutes, universities, and other non-Federal entities;

(D) the National Integrated Drought Information System to--

(i) provide an effective drought warning system;

(ii) coordinate and integrate Federal research on droughts;

(iii) collect and integrate information on key indicators of drought;

(iv) make usable, reliable, and timely forecasts and assessments of drought, including assessments of the severity of drought conditions and impacts; and

(v) communicate drought forecasts, conditions, and impacts to Federal, regional, State, tribal,

and local governments, the private sector, and the public; and

(E) any other National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration offices or programs, as appropriate.

(5) SERVICE ELEMENTS- The National Climate Service shall--

(A) conduct analyses of and studies relating to the effects of weather and climate on communities, including effects on agricultural production, natural resources, energy supply and demand, recreation, and other sectors of the economy;

(B) carry out observations, data collection, and monitoring of atmospheric and oceanic conditions on a statewide, regional, national, and global basis;

(C) provide information and technical support for Federal, regional, State, tribal, and local government efforts to assess and respond to climate variability and change;

(D) develop systems for the management and dissemination of data, information, and assessments, including mechanisms for consultation with current and potential users; and

(E) conduct research to improve forecasting, characterization, and understanding of weather and climate variability and change and its effects on communities, including its effects on agricultural production, natural resources, energy supply and demand, recreation, and other sectors of the economy.

SEC. 5. CLIMATE SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

(a) In General- The Under Secretary shall establish a Climate Service Advisory Committee to provide advice on--

- (1) climate service product development;
- (2) delivery of services to decisionmakers and other stakeholders;
- (3) infrastructure to support observations and monitoring;
- (4) computation and modeling needs, research needs, and other resources needed to develop, distribute, and ensure the utility of climate data, products, and services; and
- (5) any other topics as may be requested by the Under Secretary or Congress.

(b) Members-

- (1) IN GENERAL- The Advisory Committee shall be composed of at least 25 members appointed by the Under Secretary. Each member of the Advisory Committee shall be qualified either--
 - (A) by education, training, and experience to evaluate scientific and technical information on matters referred to the Advisory Committee under this section; or
 - (B) to evaluate the utility and need for climate products by planners, decisionmakers, the private sector, and the public.
- (2) TERMS OF SERVICE- Members shall be appointed for 3-year terms, renewable once, and shall serve at the discretion of the Under Secretary. Vacancy appointments shall be for the remainder of the unexpired term of the vacancy, and an individual so appointed may subsequently be appointed for 2 full 3-year terms if the remainder of the unexpired term is less than one year.
- (3) CHAIRPERSON- The Under Secretary shall designate a chairperson from among the members of the Advisory Committee. The designated Chairperson shall alternate between a member who is appointed as a representative and a member who is appointed as a Special Government Employee.

(4) SUBCOMMITTEES-

(A) ESTABLISHMENT- The Advisory Committee shall establish--

(i) a Subcommittee on Science and Technology to advise the National Climate Service on needed research, technology development, and additional observations, and on any other scientific or technical issues as appropriate; and

(ii) a Subcommittee on Product Development and Delivery composed primarily of representatives of the community of potential users of the products developed and delivered by the National Climate Service.

The Advisory Committee may establish such additional subcommittees of its members as may be necessary.

(B) APPOINTMENT-

(i) FULL ADVISORY COMMITTEE- At least 50 percent of the members of the Advisory Committee shall be appointed as Special Government Employees.

(ii) SUBCOMMITTEES- At least 75 percent of the members of the Subcommittee on Science and Technology shall be appointed as Special Government Employees. Not more than 25 percent of the members of the Subcommittee on Product Development and Delivery shall be appointed as Special Government Employees.

(c) Administrative Provisions-

(1) REPORTING- The Advisory Committee shall report to the Under Secretary and the appropriate requesting

party.

(2) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT- The Under Secretary shall provide administrative support to the Advisory Committee.

(3) MEETINGS- The Advisory Committee shall meet at least twice each year and at other times at the call of the Under Secretary or the Chairperson.

(4) COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES- A member of the Advisory Committee shall not be compensated for service on the Advisory Committee, but may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with subchapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code.

(d) Expiration- Section 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Climate Service Advisory Committee.

SEC. 6. REPEAL.

The National Climate Program Act ([15 U.S.C. 2901](#) et seq.) is repealed.

SEC. 7. ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL INTEGRATED SCIENCES AND ASSESSMENTS TEAMS.

(a) In General- The Under Secretary shall establish Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA) Teams through a competitive, peer-reviewed selection process. Teams shall conduct applied regional climate research and projects to address the needs of local and regional decisionmakers for information and tools to develop adaptation and response plans to climate variability and change. The awards shall be administered through a cooperative agreement between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the RISA Team. Each award shall be for a period of five years for an amount up to \$300,000 per year.

(b) RISA Teams- Teams shall be composed of multi-institutional partnerships whose individual members may include--

(1) institutions of higher education, as defined in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 ([20 U.S.C. 1001\(a\)](#));

(2) minority serving institutions, as defined in section 371(a) of the

Higher Education Act of 1965; and

(3) nongovernmental organizations, Federal agencies, State and local agencies, tribal organizations, and for-profit entities.

(c) Considerations- In making awards under this section, the Under Secretary shall consider--

(1) the overall geographic distribution of RISA Teams and existing gaps in applied research to support local and regional decisionmakers;

(2) the team's ability to contribute to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's efforts to deliver climate services in the region; and

(3) the team's proposal to integrate social and physical sciences research to address the effects of climate variability and change on the ecological, economic, and social systems in the region.

SEC. 8. SURVEY OF NEED FOR CLIMATE SERVICES.

(a) In General- The Under Secretary shall provide a report to Congress within 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act that compiles information on the current climate products being delivered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and its partner organizations to users and stakeholders and on the needs of users and stakeholders for new climate products and services.

(b) Contents of Report- The report shall identify--

(1) specific user groups and stakeholders that currently are served by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and its partner organizations;

(2) the type of climate products and services currently delivered to specific user groups and stakeholders and the specific National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration office or partner organization that delivers these products and services;

(3) potential user groups and stakeholders that may be served by expanding climate products and services; and

(4) specific needs for new climate

products and services identified by user groups and stakeholders.

(c) Consultation- The Under Secretary shall consult with the Climate Service Advisory Committee in the preparation of this report.

SEC. 9. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.

(a) In General- The Under Secretary shall prepare a plan for creating a National Climate Service in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and delivering climate products and services to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration users and stakeholders. The plan shall be submitted to the President and the Congress within 6 months after the date of enactment of this Act.

(b) Draft Plan- Prior to the submission of the final plan, the Under Secretary shall publish a draft plan in the Federal Register with a public comment period of at least 30 days.

(c) Contents- The plan shall--

(1) identify the current gaps in climate services and outline the process and resources the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration will use to fill these gaps;

(2) describe the roles of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration line offices and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration partner organizations in the development and delivery of climate products and services;

(3) describe the development and implementation of quality assurance and control mechanisms for climate products and services delivered by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and its partner organizations;

(4) identify the mechanisms and opportunities for determining user needs and engaging in a two-way dialogue with users that will inform climate product and service development and delivery of authoritative, timely, and useful information on climate variability and change and the effects on local, State, regional, national, and global scales;

(5) identify new responsibilities or

tasks to be undertaken by existing National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration line offices and partner organizations; and

(6) identify new infrastructure, equipment, personnel, or other resources needed to implement the proposed plan.

(d) Continuity of Service- During the development of the implementation plan, the public comment period, and final plan, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shall continue to provide climate services to the user community.

(e) Consultation- In developing the plan, the Under Secretary shall consult with user groups and stakeholders, other Federal agencies, the Climate Service Advisory Committee, and Congress.

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