

**NOMINATIONS TO THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
UNITED STATES SENATE**

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

—————
JULY 9, 2025
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SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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CONTENTS

	Page
Hearing held on July 9, 2025	1
Statement of Senator Cruz	1
Letter dated February 4, 2025 to Hon. Ted Cruz from Jeff Angers, President, Center for Sportfishing Policy	77
Letter dated April 22, 2025 to Hon. Ted Cruz and Hon. Maria Cantwell from Jimi Grande, Senior Vice President—Federal and Political Affairs, National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC)	78
Letter dated July 8, 2025 to Hon. Ted Cruz from Rep. Brian Babin, D.D.S., Chairman, House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology	80
Letter dated July 8, 2025 to Hon. Ted Cruz and Hon. Maria Cantwell from Frank Nutter, President, Reinsurance Association of America (RAA)	81
Statement of Senator Cantwell	3
Statement of Senator Moran	46
Statement of Senator Kim	47
Statement of Senator Blackburn	49
Statement of Senator Blunt Rochester	51
Statement of Senator Capito	53
Statement of Senator Luján	55
Statement of Senator Lummis	57
Statement of Senator Klobuchar	59
Statement of Senator Young	61
Statement of Senator Hickenlooper	62
Statement of Senator Fetterman	64
Statement of Senator Markey	65
Statement of Senator Baldwin	67
Statement of Senator Sullivan	70

WITNESSES

Neil Jacobs, Nominee to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere (NOAA Administrator)	6
Prepared statement	7
Biographical information	8
Taylor Jordan, Nominee to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction, NOAA	24
Prepared statement	25
Biographical information	26
Harry Kumar, Nominee to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs	34
Prepared statement	35
Biographical information	36

APPENDIX

Response to written questions submitted to Neil Jacobs by:	
Hon. Roger Wicker	83
Hon. Maria Cantwell	84
Hon. Edward Markey	92
Hon. Tammy Duckworth	94
Hon. John Hickenlooper	97
Hon. John Fetterman	101

IV

	Page
Response to written questions submitted to Taylor Jordan by:	
Hon. Maria Cantwell	101
Hon. Tammy Duckworth	107
Hon. John Fetterman	108
Response to written questions submitted to Harry Kumar by:	
Hon. Dan Sullivan	108
Hon. Maria Cantwell	108
Hon. Amy Klobuchar	109
Hon. Tammy Duckworth	110

**NOMINATIONS TO THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

WEDNESDAY, JULY 9, 2025

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION,
Washington, DC.

The Committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10 a.m., in room SR-253, Russell Senate Office Building, Hon. Ted Cruz, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Present: Senators Cruz [presiding], Moran, Sullivan, Blackburn, Young, Moreno, Capito, Lummis, Cantwell, Klobuchar, Schatz, Markey, Baldwin, Luján, Hickenlooper, Fetterman, Kim, and Blunt Rochester.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. TED CRUZ,
U.S. SENATOR FROM TEXAS**

The CHAIRMAN. Good morning. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation will come to order. I want to take a moment at the outset to address the tragedy in my home state over the holiday weekend. In the early hours of July 4, Central Texas was hit with extraordinary flash flooding.

More than 100 people have died, and the death toll is expected to keep growing. Over 160 remain missing right now, and the search effort is ongoing as we speak. I am the father of two daughters. When I think of those little girls that were lost at Camp Mystic, it is every parent's worst nightmare.

I was at Camp Mystic on Monday. The devastation in that 100-year-old, beautiful girls' camp that has helped raise a generation of girls and women in Texas, the devastation was the most horrific thing I have ever seen. The Guadalupe River is normally a quiet and peaceful river. I have been swimming and floating in that river dozens of times. There is a reason there are 40 camps right there in Kerr County because it is absolutely beautiful.

My youngest daughter, Catherine, goes to camp just a few miles up the river from Camp Mystic. My wife, Heidi, was there the week before picking Catherine up. We had been celebrating because Catherine had won war canoe where the girls race in canoes against other girls in the camp. And Catherine was a good athlete and then she had won war canoe. I looked at that same peaceful river and 1.8 trillion gallons of water dumped upon it in the early hours of July 4, and it rose some 30 feet.

Camp Mystic—the river is hundreds of yards away from the cabins. There is a lot of space there. And yet you looked at the cabins, and in the cabins, there was 8 foot of water in every girl's cabin.

You could see the water line. It washed out every single thing in the cabin. There is one cabin, a cabin where the youngest girls were in, called Bumble Inn. The water blew out the windows in that cabin and swept all of the girls and the counselors out. Every girl in that cabin is either confirmed dead or missing.

Outside that cabin are 17 single white crosses with the names of the girls written on it. The 17th cross, the name written on it is Dick Eastland, who for 50 years had been the Camp Director at Camp Mystic. And Dick likewise lost his life in those early morning hours in his Suburban driving through high water trying to rescue his girls. Texas, our heart is broken. And we saw extraordinary courage. We saw search and rescue.

We saw heroes. I met with a young Coast Guardsman on Monday who is credited with 165 rescues. He landed at Camp Mystic. They put him on the ground in a very difficult helicopter landing, and he was at a field at the highest point on the campgrounds helping rescue little girls.

For three and a half hours, they helicoptered out 165 girls, about 15 per helicopter. And he sat there, and held their hands, and stayed on the ground with them. This guy—I know a lot of my colleagues have gotten to meet Coast Guard swimmers who I have analogized they are kind of like Navy SEALs and California surfers mixed together.

Like this young man, he described himself in the press, he said, “I am just a dude,” which is something a Coast Guard swimmer would say. But they are completely fearless. And when I saw him, he had just hung up the phone from talking with the mom and dad, and with their daughter, and they were crying. They said, you saved our daughter’s life, and when she was there terrified out of her mind, you held her hand and told her it would be OK.

So the weather can have enormous consequences. Our thoughts today are also with the people of Ruidoso, New Mexico, who faced flash flooding just yesterday evening. The power of a flash flood, the power of a tornado, the powerful of a hurricane, the power of wildfire to devastate and destroy.

Flying in a Coast Guard helicopter up the Guadalupe River, it was astonishing the devastation that water can produce. Cars were flung around like matchbox cars. And you know, when a car hits a tree, the car loses. The car crumples. But I will tell you, when water hits trees, the trees lose. And all up and down the Guadalupe River, you saw thousands of trees just run over like a bulldozer had knocked them down. That was the force of the 30-foot wall of water that just—everything in its path, obliterated.

Now, when tragedy strikes, we ask ourselves what could have been done differently, and that is a question that we need to ask. In any crisis, there is an order that things play out. Stage number one is search and rescue, and that has got to be the first priority, saving lives, getting lives out of harm’s way.

Stage number two is recovery and rebuilding. And that is a process that takes months or even years as you go to the homes that are destroyed, you go the buildings that are destroyed, and you look to rebuild. And we will do that. Texas will rebuild. We are strong. But there is also a process of engaging in a retrospective and say-

ing, what is the exact timeline of what transpired and what could we have done better.

Look, every one of us looking at the flooding in Texas, if we could step into a time machine and go back to 2 or 3 in the morning on July 4, we would rush into those little girls' cabins and get them the hell out of here. And so one question—Dr. Jacobs, you and I had a very good conversation in my office yesterday. I want to thank each of the nominees here for your expertise.

But one question we will certainly be asking in Texas, and we ought to be asking across the country, is how can we improve the speed and rate of response that when an extreme weather warning goes out—in Texas, National Weather Service put out one just after 1 a.m. and another just after 4 a.m., but the problem is most people are asleep at 1 a.m. and 4 a.m., so those little girls never heard the warning.

And so, there are discussions about all sorts of steps we can take, including setting up sirens and warning systems along the Guadalupe River Valley, which I think makes an awful lot of sense. But we ought to be asking what lessons can be learned and what can be done more effectively to protect human life.

Now this hearing, we have three very qualified nominees. We have Dr. Neil Jacobs, who is the nominee for Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, NOAA Administrator. We have Mr. Taylor Jordan, the nominee for Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction.

And we have Mr. Harry Kumar, the nominee for Assistant Secretariat of Commerce for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs. I think each of them are highly qualified. I appreciate your willingness to serve, and I appreciate your commitment to protecting public safety. There is no mission that is more important, particularly concerning weather related events, than early detection, knowing what is happening, and improving the ability to notify people in harm's way and get them out of the way.

We know we are going to have other disasters going forward. There will be more floods, there will be more hurricanes, there will be more tornadoes. But every step we can take to remove someone from the path of that devastation is a step we need to take, and I appreciate each of your dedication to doing that. Ranking Member Cantwell.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARIA CANTWELL,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WASHINGTON**

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And as you mentioned, this hearing comes at an incredible time of human loss from the floods in Texas, and now we know in New Mexico and North Carolina.

But I want to offer my condolences to the families who have lost loved ones in this unimaginable tragedy, and to the people of Texas. We grieve along with you as a nation. Our thoughts and prayers do go to the families, to ask for strength for them, to deal with this incredible loss.

And as you said, there is a time and a place to figure out what transpired. You know, for us in the Northwest, where natural disasters, whether it is fire, flooding, earthquakes, or the big one that

is someday going to hit, this issue of first responders and communication is really important to us too.

So, I too want to thank the National Guard for their incredible work and response to this incident. I want to thank the Coast Guard men and women. Pretty sure we train those surfmen in—out on the Olympic, you know, Long Beach area of our state and we are very proud of what they do to get those men and woman ready to help do the search and rescue. But clearly, first responders did everything that they were asked to do in response to this flood.

But as you said, Mr. Chairman, there will be others. So I agree that we should figure out what we can do in the future to improve our communication system, to improve the science behind the information, and to figure out how we best prepare for the future. Today, we are considering Dr. Jacobs to be the NOAA Administrator, Mr. Taylor to be the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Protection, and Mr. Kumar to be Assistant Secretary.

NOAA does play an incredible, important role in preserving life and property, and obviously good data behind your weather reporting for sustainable fisheries to get food on the table, to support our domestic product. You play a critical role in safety and economic competitiveness.

And so, obviously, I am going to ask today about the cuts to NOAA and how, as a science agency, you preserve the core mission of an agency when we are cutting so much of the science and the science budget. The budget eliminates the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research R&D arm, which is critical to improving lead times and accuracy of information.

NOAA's R&D is at the cutting edge of science and projects like Warn On Forecast, which will give communities more notice from tornadoes and other severe weather events by using prediction models instead of waiting to detect weather service that is already occurring. The budget proposal also eliminates NOAA's integrated ocean observing system program, the Buoy system.

This is a very bipartisan program that helps us particularly in the Northwest in detecting the potential of tsunamis, hurricane forecast, fisheries, marine transportation. And even though the Administration put out an Executive Order calling for growing American fisheries, I believe that we are doing the opposite if we are not investing in the kind of stock assessments that we need to deal with fisheries management. So while the Administration seeks to slash NOAA's budget, it has also taken a sledgehammer to its workforce.

Since the start of the year, NOAA's workforce has been gutted by 2,000 employees. The agency currently has over 3,000 vacant positions, most of which cannot be filled due to the hiring freeze. For example, Pendleton, Oregon, the forecast office serving Central Washington, no longer has 24/7 local coverage because of their 44 percent vacancy rate. And in my opinion, that is unacceptable in the height of fire season.

The hiring freeze also resulted in 160 vacancies at NOAA's research ships, resulting in 30 percent of those ships being left at the docks this summer instead of charting navigation in the Arctic,

servicing key weather buoys and conducting stock assessments. So for Washington, two pollock stock assessment surveys and one salmon survey have already been canceled.

Now, what this means is that people can't fish. If we don't have the science, they can't fish. We don't know—we are putting billions of dollars of economic activity at risk. So the West Coast region of NOAA fisheries has lost so many staff that we no longer have key experts to negotiate salmon or other treaties, and entire permitting teams are gone, and local communities are begging for answers on this.

So I expect to hear how we are going to defend the science mission without the people and without the science to help deliver those essential services. I want to know what our real plan is that we are going to continue to protect our environment.

Mr. Jordan, if confirmed, you will be responsible for advising the Administrator on weather, water, climate, and related matters, and I hope that you will tell us today how you also plan to counter cuts to the weather program, and where you stand on the R&D investment that we need to improve forecasts such as supercomputing forecasts.

Climate change is driving more intense hurricanes, more frequent severe atmospheric rivers, rain events, and is doubling the number of wildfires. According to NOAA, since 1980, we have had on average nine extreme weather events annually that have cost us over \$1 billion each.

So from 1980, nine extreme events. But in the last 5 years, that has spiked to 23 events per year, and last year, it was 27 events. So we can see that we are having more devastating impact and the cost to all of us. So we are in a state of emergency that is getting worse, and we need to come up with better solutions. So we know how to do this. In 2015, as firefighters were fighting a devastating wildfire in Okanogan County and wind patterns changed, resulting in the loss of firefighters.

We implemented new tools to help with the training of a new system that would help us get better information and get that information faster. I should also note that today the OIG for the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General released a report on our National Weather Service Tornado Forecasting System and the things that they believe the office has gotten wrong on—in forecasting—the shortcomings of that system, and six plans for improvement. And so, we will probably ask you about that as well.

So finally, Mr. Kumar, you would be leading the Legislative Affairs Department. Simply put, the Department's critical engagement with members of this committee is not happening at the level we need it to happen. So, I expect you will help fundamentally change that, if confirmed, and make sure that as members ask for information and data from the agency, that they will receive it in a timely manner.

So thank you, Mr. Chairman. And again, our hearts are with you, your colleague, Senator Cornyn, the many people of Texas, and we will work with you in whatever fashion we can to help move forward and to—and help Texans in any way.

And obviously our colleagues here on the Committee from New Mexico, and our colleagues in the larger body from North Carolina. But thank you so much.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you. I appreciate that. And I want to say thank you to all my colleagues who reached out on both sides of the aisle. I think collectively, hearts are breaking across the country on what played out over the 4th of July weekend. Dr. Jacobs, you are recognized for your opening Statement.

**STATEMENT OF NEIL JACOBS, NOMINEE TO BE
UNDER SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR OCEANS
AND ATMOSPHERE (NOAA ADMINISTRATOR)**

Mr. JACOBS. Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be nominated for the position of Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmospheres. I would also like to thank President Trump and Secretary Lutnick for their trust and confidence in me with this nomination.

If I have the honor of being confirmed, I look forward to working with all of you on the important work performed by NOAA. My heart goes out to those who lost loved ones in the devastating Texas floods. As a parent with two kids in summer camp right now, I can't imagine what these grieving families are going through.

NOAA has an important, unique mission that spans the sea floor to the sun's surface. Not only do they conduct cutting edge coastal and ocean research, but they also provide life-saving forecast predictions in a wide range of environmental phenomena. From 2018 to 2021, I served as Assistant Secretary for Environmental Observation and Prediction, and later as Acting Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmospheres.

During that time, I gained significant experience and understanding of NOAA's operations, and I developed a deep appreciation for the workforce. From issuing accurate forecasts to complex weather events, managing fish stocks, mapping our coasts, launching satellites into space, their dedication and professionalism is unparalleled.

I have a very detailed understanding of what is involved in managing NOAA, from the policy, budget, and personnel side to the needs and opportunities for innovative solutions to better meet mission requirements. I previously led the agency's effort to support scientific community through a focused improvement to its external engagement strategy. This culminated in the Earth Prediction and Invasion Center, which brings together scientific expertise from Federal partners, world class researchers, and the private sector.

I also understand that to be successful, NOAA must embrace new partnerships. In 2019, under my leadership, NOAA unveiled the Big Data Project, now called NOAA Open Data Dissemination, where the public has greater access to all NOAA data through partnerships with cloud service providers.

Running a large agency with a public service mandate of protecting life and property during a pandemic was not something anyone could have been prepared to do. Under my leadership, NOAA rapidly changed and adapted operational protocols and ac-

celerated onboarding of new technology like virtual environments for daily meetings, autonomous vehicles for acoustic surveys.

Despite the pandemic, NOAA successfully met its mission requirements, including saving countless lives during the 2020 hurricane season, which had 30 named storms, 11 U.S. landfalls, shattering a record that had stood for over 100 years. If confirmed, one of my top priorities is to return the United States to the world's during global weather forecast modeling capability.

As a matter of public safety, national security, and national pride, we will restore American technological superiority with this vital service for the country and our military serving around the world. This will inquire embracing new technologies, novel approaches, and partnerships with industry to advance global observing systems. Reducing the seafood trade deficit is also a top priority.

The U.S. has an estimated \$20 billion trade deficit in seafood. Much of it is due to unfair trade practices and import of aquaculture seafood, which is often mislabeled, and the lack of domestic processing capacity. In addition to promoting the production, sale, and trade of U.S. fishery and aquaculture products, embracing new technologies and science-based approaches to stock assessments will benefit both U.S. commercial fishing industry and the recreational fishing community.

Leveling the playing field will also require cracking down on illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing. While advancing numerical weather prediction has dominated my career, the ocean is where I am most at home, whether I am fishing, diving, or surfing. I began my career as a marine electronics technician and have spent the last 30 years guiding recreational saltwater anglers.

I have a unique appreciation for the maritime industry and extensive knowledge of coastal marine fisheries conservation spanning the Carolinas to the Florida Keys. If confirmed, it would be a tremendous honor to lead such a distinguished organization. I can assure the Committee that I will do my best to ensure this team of scientists, engineers, forecasters, and uniformed officers have the resources and leadership needed to fulfill their mission of science, service, and stewardship.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and encouragement along the way. I would also like to thank the amazing people of NOAA for their dedication and service, and for sharing their knowledge and passion with me during my previous tenure at NOAA.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cantwell, and members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to be here.

[The prepared statement and biographical information of Mr. Jacobs follow:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NEIL JACOBS, NOMINEE FOR UNDER SECRETARY OF
COMMERCE FOR OCEANS AND ATMOSPHERE

Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be nominated for the position of Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere. I would also like to thank President Trump and Secretary Lutnick for their trust and confidence in me with this nomination.

If I have the honor of being confirmed, I look forward to working with all of you on the important work being performed by NOAA that benefits our country. NOAA has a unique mission that spans the sea floor to the Sun's surface. Not only does the agency conduct cutting-edge ocean and coastal research, but NOAA also provides life-saving forecasts and predictions of a wide range of environmental phenomena.

From 2018 to 2021, I served as Assistant Secretary for Environmental Observation and Prediction, and later as acting Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere. During that time, I gained significant experience and understanding of NOAA's operations, and I developed a deep appreciation of its workforce. From issuing accurate forecasts for complex weather events, managing fish stocks, mapping our coasts, and launching satellites into space, their dedication and professionalism is unparalleled.

I have a very detailed understanding of what is involved in managing NOAA from the policy, budget, and personnel side to needs and opportunities for innovative solutions to better meet the mission requirements. I previously led the agency's effort to support the scientific community through focused improvements to its external engagement strategy. This culminated in the Earth Prediction Innovation Center, which is bringing together scientific expertise from Federal partners, world-class researchers, and the private sector.

I also understand that to be successful, NOAA must embrace new partnerships. In 2019, under my leadership, NOAA unveiled the Big Data Project, now called NOAA Open Data Dissemination, where the public has greater access to all NOAA data through partnerships with cloud service providers.

Running a large agency with a public service mandate of protecting life and property during a pandemic was not something anyone could have been fully prepared to do. Under my leadership, NOAA rapidly changed and adapted operational protocols and accelerated onboarding of new technologies like virtual environments for daily meetings, and autonomous vehicles for acoustic fish surveys. Despite the pandemic, NOAA successfully met its mission requirements, including saving countless lives during the 2020 hurricane season, which had 30 named storms and 11 U.S. landfalls, shattering a record that had stood for over 100 years.

If confirmed, one of my top priorities is to return the United States to the world's leader in global weather forecast modeling capability. As a matter of public safety, national security, and national pride, we will restore American technological superiority for this vital service for the country and our military serving around the world. This will require embracing new technologies, novel approaches, and partnering with industry to advance global observing systems.

Reducing the seafood trade deficit is also a top priority. The U.S. has an estimated \$20 billion trade imbalance in seafood, much of it due to unfair trade practices, the import of aquaculture seafood, which is often mislabeled, and lack of domestic processing capacity. In addition to promoting the production, sale, and trade of U.S. fishery and aquaculture products, embracing new technologies and science-based approaches to stock assessments will benefit both the U.S. commercial fishing industry and recreational fishing community. Leveling the playing field will also require cracking down on illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

While advancing numerical weather prediction has dominated my career, the ocean is where I am most at home whether I'm fishing, diving, or surfing. I began my career as a marine electronics technician and have spent the last 30 years guiding recreational saltwater anglers. I have a unique appreciation for the maritime industry and an extensive knowledge of coastal marine fisheries conservation spanning the Carolinas to the Florida Keys.

If confirmed, it would be a tremendous honor to lead such a distinguished organization. I can assure the Committee that I will do my best to ensure this team of scientists, engineers, forecasters and uniformed officers have the resources and leadership needed to fulfill their mission of science, service, and stewardship.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and encouragement along the way. I would also like to thank all the amazing people of NOAA for their dedication and service, and for sharing their knowledge and passion with me during my previous tenure at NOAA. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to be here and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Name (Include any former names or nicknames used): Neil Andrew Jacobs Jr.

2. Position to which nominated: Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

3. Date of Nomination: February 3, 2025.

4. Address (List current place of residence and office addresses):

Residence: Information not released to the public.

Office: Information not provided.

5. Date and Place of Birth: December 12, 1973; Colorado Springs, CO.

6. Provide the name, position, and place of employment for your spouse (if married) or domestic partner, and the names and ages of your children (including step-children and children by a previous marriage).

Jennifer Modliszewski, Lineberger Bioinformatics Core, UNC

7. List all college and graduate schools attended, whether or not you were granted a degree by the institution. Provide the name of the institution, the dates attended, the degree received, and the date of the degree.

Ph.D. Atmospheric Science (Numerical modeling). 2005, North Carolina State University

M.S. Atmospheric Science (Air-sea interaction), 2000, North Carolina State University

B.S. Physics and Math, 1996, University of South Carolina

8. List all post-undergraduate employment, including the job title, name of employer, and inclusive dates of employment, and highlight all management-level jobs held and any non-managerial jobs that relate to the position for which you are nominated.

2022–2025, Chief Science Advisor, Unified Forecast System, University Corporation for Atmospheric Research

2022–2025, Senior Executive Advisor, Booz Allen Hamilton 2021–2025, Managing Director, AxioScientia, LLC

2018–2021, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction, Department of Commerce, NOAA

2013–2018, Chief Atmospheric Scientist, Panasonic Avionics Corporation 2004–2013, Director of Research and Business Development, AirDat, LLC

9. Attach a copy of your résumé.

10. List any advisory, consultative, honorary, or other part-time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed above after 18 years of age.

I have never had a position in Federal, State, or local government other than the one listed above.

11. List all positions held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, company, firm, partnership, or other business, enterprise, educational, or other institution.

American Meteorological Society (AMS) Visiting Senior Policy Fellow

American Meteorological Society (AMS) Forecast Improvement Group (Chair 2015–2017)

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Continuous Lower Emissions, Energy, and Noise

World Meteorological Organization Expert Team on Aircraft-Based Observing Systems

12. List all memberships you have had after 18 years of age or currently hold with any civic, social, charitable, educational, political, professional, fraternal, benevolent or religiously affiliated organization, private club, or other membership organization (You do not have to list your religious affiliation or membership in a religious house of worship or institution). Include dates of membership and any positions you have held with any organization. Please note whether any such club or organization restricts membership on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability.

American Meteorological Society (Fellow)

National Weather Association

World Meteorological Organization; Expert Team on Aircraft-Based Observing Systems

American Geophysical Union
 Gamma Beta Phi, National Honor Society
 Geological Society of America
 National Forensics League
 Phi Beta Kappa, Honor Society
 Pi Mu Epsilon, National Math Honor Society
 Sigma Pi Sigma, National Physics Honor Society (President: 1993–1996, USC Chapter)
 Sigma Xi, Honor Society
 Durham YMCA
 Greensboro Velo Club
 Rotary International
 Trout Unlimited

13. Have you ever been a candidate for and/or held a public office (elected, non-elected, or appointed)? If so, indicate whether any campaign has any outstanding debt, the amount, and whether you are personally liable for that debt. No.

14. List all memberships and offices held with and services rendered to, whether compensated or not, any political party or election committee within the past ten years. If you have held a paid position or served in a formal or official advisory position (whether compensated or not) in a political campaign within the past ten years, identify the particulars of the campaign, including the candidate, year of the campaign, and your title and responsibilities. None.

15. Itemize all political contributions to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity of \$200 or more for the past ten years.

Trump Victory, 2/27/20—\$520
 Trump Victory, 9/29/20—\$500

16. List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, military medals, and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievements.

Fellow, American Meteorological Society
 American Meteorological Society's Kenneth C. Spengler Award recipient (2023)
 Pi Mu Epsilon, National Math Honor Society
 Sigma Pi Sigma, National Physics Honor Society (President: 1993–1996, USC Chapter)
 Gamma Beta Phi, National Honor Society
 National Forensics League Scholarship
 Phi Beta Kappa, Honor Society
 Sigma Xi, Honor Society

17. List all books, articles, columns, letters to the editor, Internet blog postings, or other publications you have authored, individually or with others. Include a link to each publication when possible. If a link is not available, provide a digital copy of the publication when available.

Jacobs, N., J. Churchill, L. J. Pietrafesa, S. Bao, and P. T. Gayes, 2023: Ocean-Atmosphere Interactions during the Passage of an Extratropical Cyclone in the Vicinity of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, *Intl. J. of Geosciences*, 14, 855–876.

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Droegemeier, K., and N. Jacobs, 2021: Restructuring of U.S. Federal Coordination to Advance Meteorological Services. *Bull. Amer. Meteor. Soc.*, 103(2), 230–247.

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- Huang, X.-Y., F. Gao, N. A. Jacobs, and H. Wang, 2013: Assimilation of wind speed and direction observations: a new formulation and results from idealized experiments. *Tellus A*, 65, 19936.
- Wyszogrodzki, A. A., Y. Liu, N. A. Jacobs, P. Childs, Y. Zhang, G. Roux, and T. T. Warner, 2013: Analysis of the surface temperature and wind forecast bias of the NCAR-AirDat operational CONUS 4km RTFDAA forecasting system, *Meteorol. Atmos. Phys.*, 121, 3–4.
- Jacobs, N. A., P. Childs, M. Croke, A. Huffman, J. Nelson, J. T. Braid, Y. L. Liu, and X. Y. Huang, 2013: An update on the TAMDAR global network expansion, Special Symposium on Advancing Weather and Climate Forecasts: Innovative Techniques and Applications, Austin, TX.
- Nelson, J., J. T. Braid, A. K. Anderson, N. A. Jacobs, P. Childs, M. Croke, and A. Huffman, 2013: Alaska TAMDAR and the RTFDAA WRF QC System, ARAM, AMS, Austin, TX.
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- Gao, F., N. A. Jacobs, X. Y. Huang, and P. Childs, 2013: Direct assimilation of wind speed and direction for the WRF model, Special Symposium on Advancing Weather and Climate Forecasts: Innovative Techniques and Applications, AMS, Austin, TX.
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- Jacobs, N. A., M. Croke, P. Childs, Y. Liu, X. Y. Huang, and R. DeJong, 2011: The Utility of TAMDAR in the NextGen-Oriented CLEEN Program. Second Aviation, Range and Aerospace Meteorology Special Symposium on Weather-Air Traffic Management (ARAM), AMS, Seattle, WA.
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Jacobs, N. A., Y. Liu, and C.-M. Druse, 2006: Evaluation of temporal and spatial distribution of TAMDAR data in short-range mesoscale forecasts, AMS Annual Meeting, 10th Symp. IOAS-AOLS.

Jacobs, N. A., S. Raman, and G. M. Lackmann, 2006: Sensitivity of East Coast winter storms to sea surface temperature gradients, AMS Annual Meeting, 14th Conf. Sea-Atmos.

Jacobs, N. A., G. M. Lackmann and S. Raman 2005: The combined effects of Gulf Stream-induced baroclinicity and upper-level vorticity on U.S. East Coast extratropical cyclogenesis. *Mon. Wea. Rev.*, 133, 2494–2501.

Jacobs, N. A., 2004: Porting MM5 to OS X: A guide to mesoscale modeling on a G5, *Mac OSX Hints*, 15, 97.

Jacobs, N., 2004: The Role of Marine Thermal Gradient Structure on Gulf Stream-Related Extratropical Cyclogenesis, Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Marine, Earth, and Atmospheric Science, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC. 307pp.

Jacobs, N. A., S. Raman, G. M. Lackmann, and P. P. Childs, Jr, 2004: Role of the Gulf Stream on extratropical cyclogenesis, AMS Annual Meeting, 20th Conf. WAF/NWP pp. 318–322.

Raman, S., N. Jacobs, and M. Simpson, 2003: Numerical simulation of land-air-sea interactions during the northeasterly monsoon over Indian Ocean. INDOEX conf. Bangalore, India.

Jacobs, N. A., 2001: Latent and sensible heat fluxes over the Gulf Stream region during OMP. AGU, Boston, MA. Preprint pp 412–417.

Jacobs, N., 2000: Physical Oceanographic Processes and Air-Sea Interactions of extratropical cyclogenesis during the Oceans Margins Program, Thesis, Department of Marine, Earth, and Atmospheric Science, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC. 178pp.

Jacobs, N., C. Petrusak, V. Connors, D. DeMaster, T. Hopkins, 1998: Earth System Science: Integration of Computer Modeling and Laboratory Studies. 25 conf GSA/ESSE, pp. 127–131.

Jacobs, N., V. Connors, T. Hopkins, D. DeMaster, W. Sweet, 1998: The Evolution of Earth System Science at North Carolina State University. 25 conf GSA/ESSE, pp. 417–421.

18. List all speeches, panel discussions, and presentations (*e.g.*, PowerPoint) that you have given on topics relevant to the position for which you have been nominated. Include a link to each publication when possible. If a link is not available, provide a digital copy of the speech or presentation when available.

- Unified Forecast System (UFS) overview, American Meteorological Society
- UFS community governance, AMS/UIFCW
- Open innovation and UFS, AMS/UIFCW
- Advances in NWP and data assimilation, AMS/AGU
- Agency budget process, AMS policy colloquium
- Overview of NWP and open innovation
- AMS advancements in UFS applications
- PWS global ensemble system, NCEP
- PWS global model and data assimilation, UK Met Office
- Assimilation of ABOs into a global modeling system, ECMWF
- Estimation of TAMDAR Error and Assimilation Experiments, UK Met Office
- Utility of TAMDAR aircraft observations for NWP, ECMWF
- Optimization of TAMDAR for NWP, NCEP EMC
- Operational forecasting with TAMDAR, SMN
- Unique aspects of aircraft data assimilation, ECMWF

19. List all public statements you have made during the past ten years, including statements in news articles and radio and podcasts and television appearances, which are on topics relevant to the position for which you have been nominated, including dates. Include a link to each statement when possible. If a link is not available, provide a digital copy of the statement when available.

I've done a few podcasts on modeling, weather and science, and was a regular host on the weatherbrains podcast. The topics almost always pertained to numerical weather prediction.

<http://weatherbrains.com>

<https://www.youtube.com/@WeatherBrains/streams>

<https://art19.com/shows/weather-geeks/>

<https://art19.com/shows/off-the-radar>

20. List all digital platforms (including social media and other digital content sites) on which you currently or have formerly operated an account, regardless of whether or not the account was held in your name or an alias. Include the full name of an “alias” or “handle”, including the complete URL and username with hyperlinks, you have used on each of the named platforms. Indicate whether the account is active, deleted, or dormant. Include a link to each account if possible.

I do not have any social media presence, and I am not on LinkedIn.

21. Please identify each instance in which you have testified orally or in writing before Congress in a governmental or non-governmental capacity and specify the date, committee, and subject matter of each testimony.

Winning in Weather: U.S. Competitiveness in Forecasting and Modeling (6 March 2024)—House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Organic Act (18 April 2023)—House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Full Committee

Senate Confirmation: Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere (11 March 2020); United States Senate, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies

Examining Opportunities to Improve Prevention and Response of SASH at NOAA (27 February 2020)—House of Representatives, Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

A Task of EPIC Proportions: Reclaiming U.S. Leadership in Weather Modeling and Prediction (20 November 2019)—House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment

The Future of Forecasting: Building a Stronger U.S. Weather Enterprise (16 May 2019)—House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on the Environment

A Review of the NOAA Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Request (30 April 2019)—House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on the Environment

Review of the FY2020 Budget Request for the U.S. Department of Commerce (2 April 2019)—United States Senate, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2020 (27 March 2019)—House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Understanding the Changing Climate System and the Role of Climate Research (26 February 2019)—House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies

Surveying the Space Weather Landscape (26 April 2018)—House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Space

Senate Confirmation: Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Observation and Prediction (1 November 2017); United States Senate, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies

Leading the Way: Examining Advances in Environmental Technology (21 June 2017)—House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment

Private Sector Weather Forecasting: Assessing Products and Technologies (8 June 2016)—House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment

22. Given the current mission, major programs, and major operational objectives of the department/agency/commission/corporation to which you have been nominated, what in your background or employment experience do you believe affirmatively qualifies you for appointment to the position for which you have been nominated, and why do you wish to serve in that position?

I gained significant experience and understanding of NOAA's operations after previously serving as both the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction (2018–2021) and acting Under Secretary of Commerce of Oceans and Atmospheres from 2019 to 2021. I have a very detailed understanding of what is involved in managing NOAA from the policy, budget, and personnel side to needs and opportunities for innovative solutions to better meet the mission requirements. I previously led the agency's effort to support the scientific community through focused improvements to its external engagement strategy. This culminated in the Earth Prediction Innovation Center, which is bringing together the scientific expertise from Federal partners, world-class researchers, and the private sector. I also understand that to be successful, NOAA must embrace new partnerships. In 2019, under my leadership, NOAA unveiled the Big Data Project, now called NOAA Open Data Dissemination (NODD), where the public has greater access to all NOAA data through partnerships with Google, Amazon, and Microsoft.

I have extensive experience with public-private-academic partnerships for weather model and observing system development. As a founding member of Panasonic Avionics weather division's predecessor company AirDat, I directed the private side of the NWS's very first atmospheric commercial observational data acquisition as a subscription service. This is a great example of a successful public-private partnership that is still in existence today. Having worked alongside NOAA and NWS employees and scientists as a scientific collaborator, I have earned their trust and respect. Additionally, I have great working relationships with key World Meteorological Organization member countries and their respective National Meteorological Service Directors.

Prior to focusing my career on numerical weather prediction, I worked as both a marine electronics technician and a recreational saltwater inshore fishing guide. I have a unique appreciation for the recreational boating industry and an extensive knowledge of coastal marine fisheries conservation spanning the Carolinas to the Florida Keys.

23. What do you believe are your responsibilities, if confirmed, to ensure that the department/agency/commission/corporation has proper management and accounting controls, and what experience do you have in managing a large organization?

My responsibility, as the NOAA Administrator, will be to work closely with NOAA line offices, and provide leadership to better manage the agency's assets in their service to the American people. As duly confirmed by the Senate, and as political appointees, we have an obligation to comply with the direction and oversight provided by Congress to manage our agency to the best of our abilities and within the letter of the law.

I have a very detailed understanding of what is involved in managing NOAA because I've done it before. I ran the agency from 2019 to 2021, through multiple annual budget cycles, spend plans, and disaster supplemental appropriations, some of which spanned the pandemic.

Running a large agency with a public service mandate of protecting life and property during a pandemic was not something anyone could have been fully prepared to do. Under my leadership, NOAA rapidly changed and adapted operational protocols and accelerated onboarding of new technologies like cloud data access, virtual environments for daily meetings, and autonomous vehicles for acoustic fish surveys. Apart from a few bottom trawl surveys, NOAA successfully executed all of its mission essential functions, including producing the some of the most accurate hurricane forecast tracks on record for the most active Atlantic season on record (2020: 30 named storms) with the most landfalls on record (2020: 11 U.S. landfalls), while simultaneously doing a stellar job of fire weather forecasting.

24. What do you believe to be the top three challenges facing the department/agency/commission/corporation, and why?

Weather Forecasting and Modeling—Return NOAA NWS to the world's leader in global weather forecast modeling capability. The United States led the world in weather forecasting and modeling for decades, but has not kept pace with overseas competition, and is struggling to maintain the status of third most accurate global weather model among National Meteorological Services. As a matter of public safety, national security, and national pride, we will restore American technical superiority for this vital service for the country and our military serving around the world. As part of this effort, implementing a community-based earth-system modeling program is crucial. This will require adoption of cloud-based computational resources and artificial intelligence. While this is technically straightforward, it will require a significant culture shift in the workforce and proactive effort to migrate to cloud and align development efforts across a common code base. Rapid change management will always be a challenge in any large organization. The prediction of the future state of the atmosphere, ocean, and even the sun, requires accurate and timely

observations for both initialization and verification. Whether these forecasts are physics based or AI or a hybrid of both, as the model space-time resolution increases, the need for better observations increases exponentially. Embracing new technologies, novel approaches, and partnerships with industry and the research community will be an integral part of addressing this challenge.

Reduce Seafood Supply Deficit—The U.S. has an estimated \$20 billion trade imbalance in seafood, much of it due to unfair trade practices, the importation of aquaculture seafood, and lack of domestic processing capacity and aquaculture production. The U.S. imports roughly \$26 billion in seafood—nearly half of which is produced via aquaculture and 30 percent is shrimp (farmed and wild-caught). To achieve changes to the deficit, NOAA should consider increasing wild-caught production, increasing aquaculture, and reducing imports from nations with weak environmental protections. Leveling the playing field will also require cracking down on illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. Additionally, embracing new technologies and science-based approaches to stock assessments will benefit both the U.S. commercial fishing industry and recreational fishing community.

Asset management—NOAA maintains hundreds of facilities across the nation, operates some of the largest observing networks in the world, and flies some of the most cutting-edge satellites in space. Over time, these assets will need to be replenished and recapitalized to continue providing Americans with the level of service they have come to rely on. These assets will continue to require careful planning, management, and oversight to ensure NOAA continues to meet its mission requirement.

B. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1. Describe all financial arrangements, deferred compensation agreements, and other continuing dealings with business associates, clients, or customers. Please include information related to retirement accounts, such as a 401(k) or pension plan.

I have no financial arrangements, deferred compensation agreements, or other continuing dealings with business associates, clients, or customers. I do have an IRA and Roth.

2. Do you have any commitments or agreements, formal or informal, to maintain employment, affiliation, or practice with any business, association, or other organization during your appointment? If so, please explain. No.

3. Indicate any investments, obligations, liabilities, or other relationships which could involve potential conflicts of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

In connection with the nomination process, I have consulted with the Office of Government Ethics and Department of Commerce agency ethics officials to identify any potential conflicts of interest. Any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved in accordance with the terms of my ethics agreement. I understand that my ethics agreement has been provided to the Committee. I am not aware of any potential conflict of interest other than those that are the subject of my ethics agreement.

4. Describe any business relationship, dealing, or financial transaction which you have had during the last ten years, whether for yourself, on behalf of a client, or acting as an agent, that could in any way constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest. None.

5. Identify any other potential conflicts of interest and explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

Any potential conflicts of interest will be resolved in accordance with the terms of my ethics agreement. I understand that my ethics agreement has been provided to the Committee.

6. Describe any activity during the past ten years, including the names of clients represented, in which you have been engaged for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing the passage, defeat, or modification of any legislation or affecting the administration and execution of law or public policy. None.

C. LEGAL MATTERS

1. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics, professional misconduct, or retaliation by, or been the subject of a complaint to, any court, administrative agency, the Office of Special Counsel, an Inspector General, professional association, disciplinary committee, or other professional group? If yes:

- a. Provide the name of the court, agency, association, committee, or group;
- b. Provide the date the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action was issued or initiated;

- c. Describe the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action;
- d. Provide the results of the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action.

While not officially cited for breach of ethics, I encumbered the NOAA Administrator position during the September 6, 2019, incident and was one of several employees that were referred to the Inspector General. The conclusions of the IG report did not find me at fault for the incident, and I was not cited for any breach of ethics. The report concludes that while a better protocol for chain of command should have been followed, that the process for handling social media was not well established. It also concludes that I was one of only three parties who properly preserved records. In the end, I received no citation, and no disciplinary or personnel action was taken. <https://www.oig.doc.gov/OIGPublications/OIG-20-032-I.pdf>

2. Have you ever been investigated, arrested, charged, or held by any Federal, State, or other law enforcement authority of any Federal, State, county, municipal, or foreign government entity, other than for a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain. No.

3. Have you or any business or nonprofit of which you are or were an officer ever been involved as a party in an administrative agency proceeding, criminal proceeding, or civil litigation? If so, please explain. No.

4. Have you ever been convicted (including pleas of guilty or *nolo contendere*) of any criminal violation other than a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain. No.

5. Have you ever been accused, formally or informally, of sexual assault, sexual harassment, or discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or any other basis? If so, please explain. No.

6. Please advise the Committee of any additional information, favorable or unfavorable, which you feel should be disclosed in connection with your nomination. None.

D. RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMITTEE

1. Will you ensure that your department/agency/commission/corporation complies with deadlines for information set by congressional committees, and that your department/agency/commission/corporation endeavors to timely comply with requests for information from individual Members of Congress, including requests from members in the minority? Yes.

2. Will you ensure that your department/agency/commission/corporation does whatever it can to protect congressional witnesses and whistleblowers from reprisal for their testimony and disclosures? Yes.

3. Will you cooperate in providing the Committee with requested witnesses, including technical experts and career employees, with firsthand knowledge of matters of interest to the Committee? Yes.

4. Are you willing to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress on such occasions as you may be reasonably requested to do so? Yes.

NEIL ANDREW JACOBS

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Economic and environmental policy; strategic innovation for early- and growth-stage startups and public-private partnerships; quantitative computer-driven trading models for weather-sensitive commodities; numerical weather prediction; probabilistic risk mitigation; data assimilation methods; satellite, aircraft and in-situ observing systems; marine ecology; fisheries management; artificial intelligence, machine learning; cloud-based high-performance computing, data management and optimization.

EMPLOYMENT

2022-present, Chief Science Advisor, Cooperative Programs for the Advancement of Earth System Science (CPAESS), University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR). Oversee development, governance, and community engagement for the Unified Forecast System (UFS).

2022-present, Senior Executive Advisor, Booz Allen Hamilton. Business development, government relations, and innovative strategic solutions for civil, defense, space, and intelligence.

2021-present, Managing Director, AxioScientia, LLC. Strategic business development and consulting for early- and growth-stage startups in areas related to science and technology.

2019-21, Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere (Acting), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Responsible for the strategic direction and oversight of over \$6 billion in annual spending, including key investments in community Earth system model development, space innovation, autonomous systems, and unlocking partnership potential of non-governmental organizations and private industry to study the atmosphere, oceans, and promote a blue economy.

2018-21, Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction, Responsible for the strategic innovation and private sector engagement to improve U.S. weather forecast models, satellite data, and the commercial weather enterprise.

2013-18, Chief Scientist, Panasonic Avionics Corporation. Managed the business development and deployment of weather-related data and products. Directed the development of global forecast products and advanced high-resolution data assimilation to enable better decision-making by industry, commercial aviation, and international and domestic governmental agencies.

2004-13, Director of Research and Trading, AirDat, LLC. Oversee the development of new products and high-resolution forecasts for use in quantitative trading models for weather-sensitive commodities. Part of team that formed initial startup company.

2000-06, Research Scientist, North Carolina State University: Research involved atmospheric modeling (WRF) of surface temperature grid resolution to account for frontogenesis and sensible heat fluxes into the atmosphere over the southeast US and coastal waters. Gulf Stream thermal gradient structure influence on rapid extratropical cyclogenesis.

1998, Co-Developer, Computer modules for NASA's Earth System Science Program. NASA Goddard.

1997, Programmer and GOES Satellite imagery processor, NASA Langley.

1995-97, Physical Limnology of Winyah Bay: Analysis and modeling of salinity, temperature, and current. U. of South Carolina.

1993-97, Systems Engineer, Oak Ridge National Lab, Nuclear Physics Branch, TN. Joint with College of Charleston and U. of South Carolina.

1991-present, Inshore Fly Fishing Guide. Charleston, SC and Miami, FL.

1991-96, Marine Electronics Technician. Charleston, SC.

SECURITY CLEARANCE: TS/SCI (active)

EDUCATION

Ph.D. in Atmospheric Science (Numerical Weather Prediction), May 2005, North Carolina State University
Thesis: The Role of Marine Thermal Gradient Structure on Gulf Stream-Related Extratropical Cyclogenesis. (Thesis Advisors: **Dr. Sethu Raman** and **Dr. Gary M. Lackmann**; Committee Members: Dr. Ping-Tung Shaw, Kermit K. Keeter, and Dr. Kiran Alapaty).

M.S. in Air-Sea Interaction, May 2000, North Carolina State University
Thesis: Physical Oceanographic Processes and Air-Sea Interactions Associated with Extratropical Cyclogenesis During the Ocean Margins Program. (Thesis Advisor: **Dr. Leonard J. Pietrafesa**; Committee: Dr. Lian Xie, Dr. Sethu Raman, and Dr. John M. Morrison).

B.S. in Physics, May 1996, University of South Carolina

B.S. in Mathematics, May 1996, University of South Carolina
Minor in Economics, Computer Science, Marine Science

CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY

Hearing: Winning in Weather: U.S. Competitiveness in Forecasting and Modeling (6 March 2024)
House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment

Hearing: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Organic Act (18 April 2023)
House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Full Committee

Senate Confirmation: Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere (11 March 2020); nominated by President Trump
United States Senate, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies

Hearing: Examining Opportunities to Improve Prevention and Response of SASH at NOAA (27 February 2020)
House of Representatives, Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Hearing: A Task of EPIC Proportions: Reclaiming U.S. Leadership in Weather Modeling and Prediction (20 November 2019)
House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment

Hearing: The Future of Forecasting: Building a Stronger U.S. Weather Enterprise (16 May 2019)
House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on the Environment

Hearing: A Review of the NOAA Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Request (30 April 2019)
House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on the Environment

Hearing: Review of the FY2020 Budget Request for the U.S. Department of Commerce (2 April 2019)
United States Senate, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies

Hearing: The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Budget Request for Fiscal Year 2020 (27 March 2019)
 House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
 Hearing: Understanding the Changing Climate System and the Role of Climate Research (26 February 2019)
 House of Representatives, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
 Hearing: Surveying the Space Weather Landscape (26 April 2018)
 House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Space
 Senate Confirmation: Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Observation and Prediction (1 November 2017); nominated by President Trump
 United States Senate, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies
 Hearing: Leading the Way: Examining Advances in Environmental Technology (21 June 2017)
 House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment
 Hearing: Private Sector Weather Forecasting: Assessing Products and Technologies (8 June 2016)
 House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, Subcommittee on Environment
 Many additional statements co-prepared for Hearing witnesses

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Fellow, American Meteorological Society
 American Meteorological Society's Kenneth C. Spengler Award recipient (2023)
 National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF); Board member 2019-21)
 World Meteorological Organization (WMO); U.S. Delegation 2016-present; Head of U.S. Delegation 2018-21)
 U.S. Group on Earth Observations (USGEO); Head of U.S. Delegation 2018-21)
 Advisory Committee on Commercial Remote Sensing (ACCRES); Chair 2018-21)
 Interagency Council on Advancing Meteorological Services (White House NSTC/OSTP; Co-chair 2018-21)
 Group on Earth Observations (GEO); Executive Committee Co-chair 2018-21)
 American Meteorological Society (AMS) Forecast Improvement Group (Chair 2015-2018)
 World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Expert Team on Aircraft-Based Observing Systems (ET-ABO)

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

American Geophysical Union
 American Meteorological Society
 National Forensics League
 National Weather Association
 Phi Beta Kappa, Honor Society
 Sigma Xi

COURSES TAUGHT

2007-11, (NCSU): Thermodynamics (MEA 312)
 2003-07, (Meredith): Meteorology, Intro to GIS (GEO 942, 943)
 2000-01, (NCSU): Meteorology I, II (MEA 213, 214)
 1998-99, (NCSU): Oceanography and Lab (MEA 200, 210L)
 1997-04, (NCSU): Earth System Science (MEA 100)
 1993-97, (UoISC): Calculus-based physics (PHYS 101, 102, 211)

COMPUTER SKILLS

Programming Languages: Fortran, C, C++, C#, Perl, R, Python, Java.
 Computing Environments: AWS, Azure, EC2, Linux, AIX, Mac, OpenMPI, Spark, Slurm, FreeBSD, Darwin.
 Software/Models including: GFS(FV3), JEDI, GSI, MPAS, WRFDA, WW3, MOM6, GrADS, NCL, IDV, ArcGIS, MATLAB, ecFlow, Git.

PUBLICATIONS/PREPRINTS

Jacobs, N., J. Churchill, L. J. Pietrafesa, S. Bao, and P. T. Gayes, 2023: Ocean-Atmosphere Interactions during the Passage of an Extratropical Cyclone in the Vicinity of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, *Int. J. of Geosciences*, **14**, 855-876.
 Brotzge, J., D. Berchhoff, D. Carlis, F. Carr, R. Carr, J. Gerth, B. Gross, T. Hamill, S. E. Haupt, N. Jacobs, A. McGovern, D. Stensrud, G. Szatkowski, I. Szunyogh, and X. Wang, 2023: Challenges and Opportunities in Numerical Weather Prediction. *Bull. Amer. Meteor. Soc.*, **104**, 698-705.
 Jacobs, N. A., 2021: Open Innovation and the Case for Community Model Development. *Bull. Amer. Meteor. Soc.*, **102**(10), 2002-2022.
 Droegemeier, K., and N. Jacobs, 2021: Restructuring of U.S. Federal Coordination to Advance Meteorological Services. *Bull. Amer. Meteor. Soc.*, **103**(2), 230-247.
 Gao, F., Z. Liu, J. Ma, N. Jacobs, P. Childs, and H. Wang, 2019: Variational Bias Correction of TAMDAR Temperature Observations in WRF Data Assimilation System. *Mon. Wea. Rev.*, **147**, 1927-1945.
 Gao, F., X.-Y. Huang, N. Jacobs, and H. Wang, 2018: Assimilation of Wind Speed and Direction Observations: Results from real observation experiments. *Tellus A*, **67**, 1.
 Zhang, X., H. Wang, X.-Y. Huang, F. Gao, and N. Jacobs, 2015: Using Adjoint-Based Forecast Sensitivity Method to Evaluate TAMDAR Data Impacts on Regional Forecasts. *Advances in Meteorology*, Vol. 2015, Article ID 427616, 13.
 Jacobs, N., D. Mulally, A. Anderson, J. Braid, P. Childs, A. Huffman, E. Wilson, and F. Gao, 2015: Recent Advancements in the TAMDAR Sensor Network Expansion, (IOAS-AOLS), AMS.
 Jacobs, N., F. Gao, P. Childs, X. Y. Huang, and H. Wang, 2015: Optimization of In-situ Aircraft Observations for Various Assimilation Techniques, (IOAS-AOLS), AMS.
 Liu, Y., M. Xu, L. Pan, Y. Liu, N. Jacobs, and P. Childs, 2015: Implementation of a CONUS RTFDAA system with radar data assimilation for convection-resolvable analysis and prediction, (IOAS-AOLS), AMS.
 Gao, F., P. P. Childs, X.-Y. Huang, N. A. Jacobs, and J. Z. Min, 2014: A Relocation-based Initialization Scheme to Improve Track-forecasting of Tropical Cyclones. *Adv. Atmos. Sci.*, **31**(1), 27-36.

- Jacobs, N. A., D. J. Mulally, and A. K. Anderson, 2014: Correction of Flux Valve–Based Heading for Improvement of Aircraft Wind Observations. *J. Atmos. Oceanic Technol.*, **31**, 1733–1747.
- Jacobs, N. A., and J. E. Rex, 2013: Benefits and Utility of Tropospheric Airborne Meteorological Data Reporting. *Air Traffic Control Quarterly*, January, First Quarter, 2013.
- Huang, X.-Y., F. Gao, N. A. Jacobs, and H. Wang, 2013: Assimilation of wind speed and direction observations: a new formulation and results from idealized experiments. *Tellus A*, **65**, 19936.
- Wyszogrodzki, A. A., Y. Liu, N. A. Jacobs, P. Childs, Y. Zhang, G. Roux, and T. T. Warner, 2013: Analysis of the surface temperature and wind forecast bias of the NCAR-AirDat operational CONUS 4km RTFDFA forecasting system. *Meteorol. Atmos. Phys.*, **121**, 3–4.
- Jacobs, N. A., P. Childs, M. Croke, A. Huffman, J. Nelson, J. T. Braid, Y. L. Liu, and X. Y. Huang, 2013: An update on the TAMDAR global network expansion, Special Symposium on Advancing Weather and Climate Forecasts: Innovative Techniques and Applications, Austin, TX.
- Nelson, J., J. T. Braid, A. K. Anderson, N. A. Jacobs, P. Childs, M. Croke, and A. Huffman, 2013: Alaska TAMDAR and the RTFDFA WRF QC System, ARAM, AMS, Austin, TX.
- Huffman, A., P. Childs, M. Croke, N. A. Jacobs, and Y. L. Liu, 2013: Verification of the NCAR-AirDat operational RT-FDDA-WRF for the 2011 and 2012 spring convective seasons, IOAS, AMS, Austin, TX.
- Gao, F., N. A. Jacobs, X. Y. Huang, and P. Childs, 2013: Direct assimilation of wind speed and direction for the WRF model, Special Symposium on Advancing Weather and Climate Forecasts: Innovative Techniques and Applications, AMS, Austin, TX.
- Richardson, H., N. A. Jacobs, P. Childs, P. Marinello, and X. Y. Huang, 2013: UAS observations and their impact on NWP during TUFT, ARAM, AMS, Austin, TX.
- Gao, F., P. Childs, X. Y. Huang, and N. A. Jacobs, 2013: A new method for vortex relocation within balanced flow field, NWP, Austin, TX.
- Gao, F., X. Zhang, N. Jacobs, X.-Y. Huang, Xin Zhang, P. Childs, 2012. Estimation of TAMDAR Observational Error and Assimilation Experiments. *Wea. Forecasting*, **27**, 4, 856-877.
- Zhang, Y. Y., Liu, N. A. Jacobs, P. Childs, T. Nipen, T. T. Warner, L. D. Monache, G. Roux, A. Wyszogrodzki, W. Y. Y. Cheng, W. Yu, and R. - S. Sheu, 2012: Evaluation of the impact of assimilating the TAMDAR data on WRF-based RTFDFA simulations and the RTFDFA performance on predicting warm-season precipitation over the CONUS. *Wea. Forecasting*, under revision.
- Gao, F., X.-Y. Huang, N. Jacobs, 2012: The Assimilation of Wind Speed and Direction Based on WRFDA 3D-Var System, New Orleans, LA.
- Zhang, Xiaoyan, X.-Y. Huang, T. Auligne, Xin Zhang, F. Gao, N. Jacobs, P. Childs. 2012. Evaluation of TAMDAR Data Impact on Forecast Error with WRFDA-FSO System, AMS, New Orleans, LA.
- Gao, F., Xiaoyan Zhang, X.-Y. Huang, Xin Zhang, N. Jacobs, P. Childs, 2011: Preliminary Results of Directly Assimilating Wind Speed and Direction Based on WRFDA 3D-Var System. 12th WRF Users' Workshop, Boulder, Colorado, 20-24 June 2011.
- Liu, Y., T. Warner, S. Swerdlin, T. Betancourt, J. Knievel, B. Mahoney, J. Pace, D. Rostkier-Edelstein, N. A. Jacobs, P. Childs, and K. Parks, 2011: NCAR ensemble RTFDFA: real-time operational forecasting applications and new data assimilation developments. 24th Conference on Weather and Forecasting (WAF-NWP), AMS, Seattle, WA.
- Huffman, A., N. A. Jacobs, M. Croke, P. Childs, X. Y. Huang, and Y. Liu, 2011: Verification and Sensitivity of the NCAR-AirDat Operational Forecasting Systems to TAMDAR Observations. 15th Symposium (IOAS-AOLS), AMS, Seattle, WA.
- Jacobs, N. A., F. Gao, P. Childs, X. Zhang, X. Y. Huang, X. Zhang, M. Croke, and Y. Liu, 2011: Optimization of In-situ Aircraft Observations for Various Assimilation Techniques. 15th Symposium (IOAS-AOLS), AMS, Seattle, WA.
- Jacobs, N. A., M. Croke, P. Childs, Y. Liu, X. Y. Huang, and R. DeJong, 2011: The Utility of TAMDAR in the NextGen-Oriented CLEEN Program. Second Aviation, Range and Aerospace Meteorology Special Symposium on Weather-Air Traffic Management (ARAM), AMS, Seattle, WA.
- Croke, M., N. A. Jacobs, D. J. Mulally, A. K. Anderson, J. T. Braid, P. Childs, A. Huffman, Y. Liu, and X. Y. Huang, 2011: Recent Advancements in the TAMDAR Sensor Network Expansion. 15th Symposium on Integrated Observing and Assimilation Systems for the Atmosphere, Oceans and Land Surface (IOAS-AOLS), AMS, Seattle, WA.
- Jacobs, N. A., P. Childs, M. Croke, Y. Liu, and X. Y. Huang, 2010: An Update on the TAMDAR Sensor Network Deployment, (IOAS-AOLS), GA.
- Jacobs, N. A., M. Croke, P. Childs, and Y. Liu, 2010: The Potential Utility of TAMDAR Data in Air Quality Forecasting, (IOAS), Atlanta, GA.
- Childs, P., N. A. Jacobs, M. Croke, Y. Liu, W. Wu, G. Roux, and M. Ge, 2010: An Introduction to the NCAR-AirDat Operational TAMDAR-Enhanced RTFDFA-WRF, (IOAS-AOLS), AMS, Atlanta, GA.
- Croke, M., N. Jacobs, P. Childs, and Y. Liu, 2009: The Utility of TAMDAR on Short-Range Forecasts over Alaska, (IOAS), AMS.
- Jacobs, N., P. Childs, M. Croke, Y. Liu, and X. Y. Huang, 2009: The Optimization Between TAMDAR Data Assimilation Methods and Model Configuration in WRF-ARW, (IOAS-AOLS), AMS.
- Childs, P., N. Jacobs, M. Croke, Y. Liu, and X. Y. Huang, 2009: TAMDAR- Related Impacts on the AirDat Operational WRF-ARW as a Function of Data Assimilation Techniques, (IOAS-AOLS), AMS.
- Jacobs, N., P. Childs, M. Croke, and Y. Liu, 2008: The Effects of Horizontal Grid Spacing and Vertical Resolution on TAMDAR Data assimilation in Short-Range Mesoscale Forecasts, AMS Annual Meeting, 12th Symposium on Integrated Observing and Assimilation Systems for the Atmosphere, Oceans, and Land Surface (IOAS-AOLS).
- Jacobs, N. A., S. Raman, G. M. Lackmann, and P. P. Childs, Jr, 2007: The influence of the Gulf Stream induced SST gradients on the US East Coast winter storm of 24-25 January 2000. *International Journal of Remote Sensing*, **29**, 6145-6174.
- Jacobs, N. A., 2007: Potential benefits of tropospheric airborne meteorological data reporting (TAMDAR). *Managing the Skies*, **5**, 3, 20-23.

- Liu, Y., T. Warner, S. Swerdlin, W. Yu, N. Jacobs, and M. Anderson, 2007: Assimilation data from diverse sources for mesoscale NWP: TAMDAR-data impact. *Geophysical Research Abstracts*, **9**, EGU2007-A-03109.
- Liu, Y., N. A. Jacobs, W. Yu, T. T. Warner, S. P. Swerdlin, and M. Anderson, 2007: An OSSE study of TAMDAR data impact on mesoscale data assimilation and prediction, AMS Annual Meeting, 11th Symposium on (IOAS-AOLS) 5.20.
- Jacobs, N. A., 2006: The effects of lower-tropospheric data resolution on short-range mesoscale model forecasts of surface temperatures during the summer season, Doc. and Tech. Note AirDat, LLC, 53 pp.
- Jacobs, N. A., and Y. Liu, 2006: A comprehensive quantitative precipitation forecast statistical verification study, Doc. and Tech. AirDat 25 pp.
- Jacobs, N. A., Y. Liu, and C.-M. Druse, 2006: Evaluation of temporal and spatial distribution of TAMDAR data in short-range mesoscale forecasts, AMS Annual Meeting, 10th Symp. IOAS-AOLS.
- Jacobs, N. A., S. Raman, and G. M. Lackmann, 2006: Sensitivity of East Coast winter storms to sea surface temperature gradients, AMS Annual Meeting, 14th Conf. Sea-Atmos.
- Jacobs, N. A., G. M. Lackmann and S. Raman 2005: The combined effects of Gulf Stream-induced baroclinicity and upper-level vorticity on U.S. East Coast extratropical cyclogenesis. *Mon. Wea. Rev.*, **133**, 2494–2501.
- Jacobs, N. A., 2004: Porting MMS to OS X: A guide to mesoscale modeling on a G5, *Mac OSX Hints*, **15**, 97.
- Jacobs, N., 2004: The Role of Marine Thermal Gradient Structure on Gulf Stream-Related Extratropical Cyclogenesis, Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Marine, Earth, and Atmospheric Science, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC. 307pp.
- Jacobs, N. A., S. Raman, G. M. Lackmann, and P. P. Childs, Jr, 2004: Role of the Gulf Stream on extratropical cyclogenesis, AMS Annual Meeting, 20th Conf. WAF/NWP pp. 318-322.
- Raman, S., N. Jacobs, and M. Simpson, 2003: Numerical simulation of land-air-sea interactions during the northeasterly monsoon over Indian Ocean. INDOEX conf. Bangalore, India.
- Jacobs, N. A., 2001: Latent and sensible heat fluxes over the Gulf Stream region during OMP. AGU, Boston, MA. Preprint pp 412-417.
- Jacobs, N., 2000: Physical Oceanographic Processes and Air-Sea Interactions of extratropical cyclogenesis during the Oceans Margins Program, Thesis, Department of Marine, Earth, and Atmospheric Science, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC. 178pp.
- Jacobs, N., C. Petrusak, V. Connors, D. DeMaster, T. Hopkins, 1998: Earth System Science: Integration of Computer Modeling and Laboratory Studies. 25 conf GSA/ESSE, pp. 127-131.
- Jacobs, N., V. Connors, T. Hopkins, D. DeMaster, W. Sweet, 1998: The Evolution of Earth System Science at North Carolina State University. 25 conf GSA/ESSE, pp. 417-421.
- 1996-present, Collegiate policy (cx) debate (coaching, brief-writing, strategy), Baylor, Stanford, Dartmouth, and UofSC.
- Commercial Driver License NC: Class B (GVWR 26,001lbs or more)
- Personal interests:** saltwater fly fishing, surfing, cycling, climbing, backpacking, stony coral propagation, and native orchid conservation.

Addendum to the questionnaire submitted to the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, 119th Congress by Neil Jacobs.

Upon further review, I have identified additional pieces of information that are responsive to questions A.8, 11, 12, 15, 17, and 18 on the Committee's questionnaire. They are:

- **A.8** - Mr. Jacobs resume indicates he was the Acting Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere from 2019-2021, but it is not disclosed in his questionnaire. There are multiple other positions that Mr. Jacobs listed on his resume that appear responsive to this request but also not disclosed in his questionnaire. Please clarify and provide a supplement as appropriate.
 - **Clarification:** From 2019 to 2021, while I was officially employed as the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction, I was also performing the duties of Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere. I was not sworn in to this role, nor did my salary or compensation reflect this role. It was in addition to my official role (i.e., Acting). The other positions prior to 2004 were part of graduate student research and various assistantships that were either non-managerial or unrelated to the role for which I was nominated.
- **A.11** - Please indicate what positions Mr. Jacobs held with FAA Continuous Lower Emissions, Energy, and Noise, and the World Meteorological Organization Expert Team on Aircraft-based Observing Systems, as requested.
 - **Clarification:** For the Federal Aviation Administration Continuous Lower Emissions, Energy, and Noise Program and the World Meteorological Organization Expert Team on Aircraft-Based Observing Systems, I was considered one of many on a team of technical experts. While the roles had no specific titles, I supposed my position would be referred to as a "technical expert".
- **A.12** - Mr. Jacobs did not list any dates or positions held with the organizations listed, as requested (except for Sigma Pi Sigma). Additionally, there are multiple memberships and organizations listed on Mr. Jacobs resume that are not disclosed in his questionnaire. Please specify the dates of Mr. Jacobs's membership and the positions he held with these organizations, and supplement with additional responsive materials as appropriate.
 - **Clarification:** Other than the one specified, I did not hold any specific position in those organizations other than general membership. I don't have specific dates of membership, but the approximate dates, to the best of my knowledge, are listed below, which include some intermittent lapses in membership/dues. American Meteorological Society: approximately 1995 to present; (Fellow 2025); National Weather Association: approximately/intermittently 2020 to present; WMO ABO-ET: approximately 2014 to 2016; American Geophysical Union, Geological

Society of America: approximately 1995 to 2004; National Forensics League: approximately 1989 to 1998; Sigma Pi Sigma, National Physics Honor Society (President: 1993-1996, USC Chapter), Sigma Xi, Honor Society, Gamma Beta Phi, Phi Beta Kappa, Pi Mu Epsilon: approximately 1992 to 1998; Rotary International: approximately 1992 to 1996; Durham YMCA, Trout Unlimited, and Greensboro Velo Club: approximately/intermittently: 1996 to 2015

- **A.15** - We have identified political contributions that appear to be from Mr. Jacobs and not disclosed. See below. Please conduct a thorough search and provide a supplement as appropriate. Donald J. Trump for President, 9/29/20 - \$500 (questionnaire discloses a contribution in this amount/date only to "Trump Victory") Donald J. Trump for President, 3/30/20 - \$520 Trump Victory, 3/30/20 - \$520 Donald J. Trump for President, 2/27/20 - \$520 (questionnaire discloses a contribution in this amount/date only to "Trump Victory")
 - **Clarification:** According to the FEC, the following donations were made through WinRed website to the joint fundraising committee listed as "Trump Victory": 02/27/20 - \$520.10, 03/03/20 - \$520.10, 09/29/20 - \$499.00. The FEC website lists both Donald J. Trump for President, Inc. and Trump Victory with the exact same amounts because it is the same contribution. This is denoted by the "year to date" column on the FEC website.
- **A.17 and A.18** - Please provide a link to or digital copy of each item listed as requested. If neither exists, please specify for each.
 - **Clarification:** I have compiled a directory of digital copies of papers, power points, and seminars I have given or written. The volume and file sizes far exceed what I can electronically transmit, so I plan to provide the committee with external drives.

The undersigned certifies that the information contained in the public addendum is true and correct.

Signed  Date: May 28, 2025

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Dr. Jacobs. Mr. Jordan, you are recognized for your opening statement.

**STATEMENT OF TAYLOR JORDAN, NOMINEE TO BE AN
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL OBSERVATION AND PREDICTION, NOAA**

Mr. JORDAN. Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be nominated for the position of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction by President Trump, and I also want to thank Secretary Lutnick for his support of my nomination.

If I have the honor of being confirmed, I look forward to working with all of you on the important work performed by NOAA in the areas of observation, data, and forecasting. I would also like to thank and recognize my fiancée, Minsu Crowder-Han, and my family watching from Texas.

My mother, Cindy Jordan, and her husband, Scott Wright, as well as my father, Gene Jordan, my brother, Chris Jordan, and his family. As a born and raised Texan, I have had a lifelong fascination with weather. I grew up in Longview, in East Texas, which has seen its fair share of severe weather impacts, tornadoes, straight line winds, hail, lightning strikes.

As a kid, every time the sirens would go off for a potential tornado, my father would first go outside and look up at the sky, which might be a uniquely Texan behavior, but I would head to my parents' closet to take shelter. I would also like to take a moment to mention the floods in Texas this past weekend.

As a Texan, this hits close to home for me, and is a tragic reminder that weather affects Americans every day. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Secretary of Commerce and the NOAA Administrator to ensure the National Weather Service continues to provide weather forecasts that keep Americans out of harm's way.

Collectively, I have had the privilege of working on NOAA issues for the last 14 years, and I have worked on these issues from three distinct vantage points, in Congress, at NOAA, and in the private sector. After graduating from the University of North Texas, I was fortunate enough to have an internship in D.C. for the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, where I first worked under Chairman Ralph Hall and then Chairman Lamar Smith.

It was there on the Committee where I learned about NOAA's mission and how their weather forecasting resulted in those sirens I always heard growing up. The forecast for those severe storms started with NOAA. I spent 7 years on the House Science Committee working on issues related to NOAA and other civil science agencies. I was the lead author for the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act, also known as the Weather Act.

That bill was the first major piece of weather related legislation in decades and gave NOAA tools to help it better achieve its mission of protecting lives and property. Many of the Weather Act's authorizations are still relevant today, and if I am honored to be confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee to reauthorize this important piece of legislation. I also had the privilege

of serving as a Senior Policy Advisor to the NOAA Administrator from 2018 to 2020.

In this role, I oversaw the implementation of the Weather Act and worked closely with NOAA's leadership and staff to provide accurate and timely weather forecasts. I also worked with NOAA line offices to help manage multi-billion dollar programs and acquisitions across the agency. Since 2021, I have worked in the private sector to advocate for programs and policies that support NOAA's mission and create meaningful partnerships.

I have worked with private companies that provide NOAA with valuable weather data. Contractors that provide technical and expert support services. Scientists that contribute cutting-edge knowledge to our understanding of the Earth, and many others that support NOAA in various ways. Thanks to these experiences, I have developed a deep appreciation for NOAA's mission and its lifesaving information.

NOAA operates in every state, forecasts for every location, and provides important and unique information across the country every day. NOAA achieves this through extensive observing networks and infrastructure, dedicated scientists and forecasters, and public-private partnerships. NOAA relies on expertise from our robust American science and technology ecosystem, from private companies, contractors, academia, and universities, nonprofits, State, local, and tribal partners.

If confirmed, it would be a tremendous honor to help lead such a distinguished organization of scientists, engineers, forecaster, and uniformed officers. I will work closely with members of this committee to ensure NOAA continues to provide accurate and timely weather forecasting to protect lives and property and safeguard the national economy.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cantwell, and members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you. I would be pleased to answer any questions you have.

[The prepared statement and biographical information of Mr. Jordan follow:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF TAYLOR JORDAN, NOMINEE FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL OBSERVATION AND PREDICTION

Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am honored to be nominated for the position of Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction by President Trump, and I also want to thank Secretary Lutnick for his support of my nomination. If I have the honor of being confirmed, I look forward to working with all of you on the important work performed by NOAA in the areas of observation, data, and forecasting.

I would also like to thank and recognize my fiancée Minsu Crowder-Han for being with me here today, and my family watching from Texas: my mother Cindy Jordan and her husband Scott Wright, as well as my father Gene Jordan, brother Chris Jordan and his family.

As a born and raised Texan, I have had a lifelong fascination with weather. I grew up in Longview in East Texas, which has seen its fair share of severe weather impacts: tornados, straight-line winds, hail, and lightning strikes. As a kid, every time the sirens would go off; for a potential tornado, my father would first go outside and look up at the sky—a uniquely Texan behavior—while I would head to my parent's closet to take shelter.

Collectively, I have had the privilege of working on NOAA issues for the last 14 years, and I have worked on these issues from three distinct vantage points: (1) in Congress, (2) at NOAA, and (3) in the private sector.

After graduating from the University of North Texas, I was fortunate enough to have an internship in DC for the House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, where I worked first under Chairman Ralph Hall and then Chairman Lamar Smith. It was there, on the Committee, where I learned about NOAA's mission and how their weather forecasting resulted in those sirens I always heard growing up—the forecast for those severe storms started with NOAA.

I spent seven years on the House Science Committee, working on issues related to NOAA and other civil science agencies. I was the lead author for the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act, also known as the Weather Act. That bill was the first major piece of weather-related legislation in decades and gave NOAA tools to help it better achieve its mission of protecting lives and property. Many of the Weather Act's authorizations are still relevant today, and if I am honored to be confirmed, I look forward to working with this Committee to reauthorize this important piece of legislation.

I also had the privilege of serving as a senior policy advisor to the NOAA Administrator from 2018–2020. In this role, I oversaw implementation of the Weather Act, and worked closely with NOAA's leadership and staff; to provide accurate and timely weather forecasts. I also worked with leadership and NOAA line offices to help manage multi-billion dollar programs and acquisitions across the agency.

Since 2021, I have worked in the private sector to advocate for programs and policies that improve NOAA's mission and create meaningful partnerships. I have worked with private companies that provide NOAA with valuable weather data, contractors that provide technical and expert support services, scientists that contribute cutting-edge knowledge to our understanding of the earth, and many others that support NOAA in various ways.

Thanks to these experiences, I have developed a deep appreciation for NOAA's mission and its life-saving information. NOAA operates in every state, forecasts for every location, and provides important and unique information across the country every day. NOAA achieves this through extensive observing networks and infrastructure, dedicated scientists and forecasters, and public-private partnerships. NOAA relies on expertise from our robust American science and technology ecosystem—from private companies, contractors, academia, non-profits, and state, local, and tribal partners.

If confirmed, it would be a tremendous honor to help lead such a distinguished organization of scientists, engineers, forecasters and uniformed officers. I will also work closely with Members of this Committee to ensure NOAA continues to provide accurate and timely weather forecasting to protect lives and property, and safeguard the national economy.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Cantwell, and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Name (Include any former names or nicknames used): Taylor Ross Jordan.
2. Position to which nominated: Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction.
3. Date of Nomination: February 11, 2025.
4. Address (List current place of residence and office addresses):

Residence: Information not released to the public.

Office: Information not provided.

5. Date and Place of Birth: Longview, Texas (Gregg County); August 7, 1987.
6. Provide the name, position, and place of employment for your spouse (if married) or domestic partner, and the names and ages of your children (including step-children and children by a previous marriage).

Not married.

7. List all college and graduate schools attended, whether or not you were granted a degree by the institution. Provide the name of the institution, the dates attended, the degree received, and the date of the degree.

University of North Texas, Bachelor of Arts in International Relations, 2006–2010.

Johns Hopkins University, Master of Science in Energy and Climate Policy, 2013–2014.

8. List all post-undergraduate employment, including the job title, name of employer, and inclusive dates of employment, and highlight all management-level jobs

held and any non-managerial jobs that relate to the position for which you are nominated.

U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology—Professional Staff Member, 2011–2018.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration—Senior Policy Advisor, 2018–2020.

Innovative Federal Strategies—Principal, 2021 to present.

9. Attach a copy of your résumé.

Attached.

10. List any advisory, consultative, honorary, or other part-time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed above after 18 years of age. None.

11. List all positions held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, company, firm, partnership, or other business, enterprise, educational, or other institution. None.

12. List all memberships you have had after 18 years of age or currently hold with any civic, social, charitable, educational, political, professional, fraternal, benevolent or religiously affiliated organization, private club, or other membership organization (You do not have to list your religious affiliation or membership in a religious house of worship or institution). Include dates of membership and any positions you have held with any organization. Please note whether any such club or organization restricts membership on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability.

American Meteorological Society

13. Have you ever been a candidate for and/or held a public office (elected, non-elected, or appointed)? If so, indicate whether any campaign has any outstanding debt, the amount, and whether you are personally liable for that debt. No.

14. List all memberships and offices held with and services rendered to, whether compensated or not, any political party or election committee within the past ten years. If you have held a paid position or served in a formal or official advisory position (whether compensated or not) in a political campaign within the past ten years, identify the particulars of the campaign, including the candidate, year of the campaign, and your title and responsibilities. None.

15. Itemize all political contributions to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity of \$200 or more for the past ten years.

Don Bacon for Congress, 10/21/2024—\$260.25

Trump National Committee JFC, 09/06/2024—\$260.25

Chuck Fleischmann, 4/17/2024—\$500.00

Hal Rogers, 03/12/2024—\$500.00

Tom Cole, 06/11/2024—\$500.00

Dale Strong, 6/12/2024—100.00

Trump Victory, 09/29/2020—\$250.00

Trump Victory, 2/24/2020—\$1041.98

16. List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, military medals, and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievements.

American Council on Germany, McCloy Fellowship on Global Trends, October 2016. Berlin, Germany

17. List all books, articles, columns, letters to the editor, Internet blog postings, or other publications you have authored, individually or with others. Include a link to each publication when possible. If a link is not available, provide a digital copy of the publication when available. None.

18. List all speeches, panel discussions, and presentations (*e.g.*, PowerPoint) that you have given on topics relevant to the position for which you have been nominated. Include a link to each publication when possible. If a link is not available, provide a digital copy of the speech or presentation when available.

American Meteorological Society, Congressional Panel, 2016

American Meteorological Society, Congressional Panel, 2017

American Meteorological Society, Congressional Panel, 2019

19. List all public statements you have made during the past ten years, including statements in news articles and radio and podcasts and television appearances, which are on topics relevant to the position for which you have been nominated, including dates. Include a link to each statement when possible. If a link is not available, provide a digital copy of the statement when available. None.

20. List all digital platforms (including social media and other digital content sites) on which you currently or have formerly operated an account, regardless of whether or not the account was held in your name or an alias. Include the full name of an "alias" or "handle", including the complete URL and username with hyperlinks, you have used on each of the named platforms. Indicate whether the account is active, deleted, or dormant. Include a link to each account if possible.

Twitter: www.x.com/thegreatesthoax

Instagram: www.instagram.com/thegreatesthoax

LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/taylor-jordan-5915b94a

21. Please identify each instance in which you have testified orally or in writing before Congress in a governmental or non-governmental capacity and specify the date, committee, and subject matter of each testimony. None.

22. Given the current mission, major programs, and major operational objectives of the department/agency/commission/corporation to which you have been nominated, what in your background or employment experience do you believe affirmatively qualifies you for appointment to the position for which you have been nominated, and why do you wish to serve in that position?

My 14 years of experience in Washington DC have been centered on expert knowledge of NOAA and its various programs. My work at the House Science Committee as the Professional Staff Member overseeing NOAA, and working directly at NOAA as the Senior Policy Advisor, qualify me for this appointment. Since leaving NOAA and the Federal Government, I have advocated on behalf of private sector companies and nonprofits that work closely with NOAA. My experience working with NOAA at three different vantage points give me a unique perspective and understanding of NOAA's mission. If I am confirmed for this role, I wish to serve my country again in Federal Government and ensure that critical programs at NOAA serve the American people.

23. What do you believe are your responsibilities, if confirmed, to ensure that the department/agency/commission/corporation has proper management and accounting controls, and what experience do you have in managing a large organization?

NOAA's mission is to protect lives and property. It does so through accurate and timely weather forecasts. It is the responsibility of NOAA leadership to ensure NOAA operates efficiently and effectively to produce lifesaving forecasts. My responsibility as the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction will be to work closely with NOAA line offices to provide leadership and help manage infrastructure and assets. In my experience working on the House Science Committee, I had the opportunity work with staff and Members from the entire U.S. House of Representatives to craft legislation and conduct oversight on many environmental issues. During my time at NOAA, I had the opportunity to work with countless scientists and policy experts on issues of national importance, and help push policy and consensus forward to improve agency success for the American people.

24. What do you believe to be the top three challenges facing the department/agency/commission/corporation, and why?

NOAA must face many challenges in the coming years. 1) NOAA must ensure that its weather modelling and prediction capabilities remain accurate and timely to protect American lives and property. NOAA has long been a global leader in weather forecasting but has not kept pace with international progress in recent years. 2) NOAA must ensure it manages its data portfolio and associated infrastructure in a responsible manner that is consistent with operational agency needs. NOAA relies on vast networks of data and technologies that underpin accurate weather forecasts. These systems should be scaled and improved to increase accuracy and benefit to the American taxpayer. 3) NOAA must ensure it manages costs and budget for large acquisitions such as its satellite systems and potential future radar recapitalization efforts. Historically, NOAA satellite programs have cost tens of billions of dollars. While these systems remain critical, their portion of NOAA's budget strains other operational mission functions. In the coming years, NOAA will likely need to budget for next-generation weather radar replacements and other large assets.

B. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1. Describe all financial arrangements, deferred compensation agreements, and other continuing dealings with business associates, clients, or customers. Please include information related to retirement accounts, such as a 401(k) or pension plan.

Innovative Federal Strategies (IFS) maintains a profit-sharing (retirement) plan and makes contributions based on a formula recommended by a Third-Party Administrator. I am due a contribution for my employment in 2024 that totals \$17,836.50. I expect that contribution will be made to my profit-sharing account in June or July of 2025. I will not be due a contribution for my employment in calendar year 2025 based on the plan requirements.

IFS' outside counsel has advised the firm during my nomination process, and I have de-registered from lobbying activities as of March 31, 2025 concurrent with my agreement with IFS not to make lobbying contacts.

2. Do you have any commitments or agreements, formal or informal, to maintain employment, affiliation, or practice with any business, association, or other organization during your appointment? If so, please explain.

I have no formal or informal commitments or agreements to maintain employment, affiliation, or practice with any business, association, or other organization during my appointment.

3. Indicate any investments, obligations, liabilities, or other relationships which could involve potential conflicts of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

As part of my duties at Innovative Federal Strategies, I have advocated and lobbied the legislative branch and executive branch, including NOAA, on behalf of several companies. I will engage with counsel at the agency to determine where it is appropriate and necessary for me to recuse myself from matters involving Innovative Federal Strategies and/or its current or former clients with whom I worked. I will routinely engage with General Counsel to ensure I remain compliant with applicable laws and regulations.

I do not hold any other investments, obligations, or liabilities that could involve a potential conflict of interest.

4. Describe any business relationship, dealing, or financial transaction which you have had during the last ten years, whether for yourself, on behalf of a client, or acting as an agent, that could in any way constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

As part of my duties at IFS over the last four years, I lobbied on behalf of the firm's clients for issues related to NOAA. Clients of the firm enter into agreements to provide lobbying services that interact with Congressional offices as well as the Executive branch.

I will engage with NOAA ethics officials during my appointment to determine where it is appropriate to recuse myself from certain contractual issues that involve companies that I lobbied on behalf of during my tenure at IFS.

5. Identify any other potential conflicts of interest and explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

I am not aware of any other potential conflicts of interest that have not otherwise been disclosed.

6. Describe any activity during the past ten years, including the names of clients represented, in which you have been engaged for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing the passage, defeat, or modification of any legislation or affecting the administration and execution of law or public policy.

During my time at IFS, I have lobbied on behalf of multiple clients of the firm, primarily during the Congressional Appropriations process. I have lobbied for the below companies at various points over the last four years:

- AccuWeather
- Arianespace
- Association for the Advancement of AI
- Care Weather Technologies
- Covax
- Ethereal Space
- Exail Inc.
- FLYHT
- GreenSight Inc.
- Ideanomics

- Interos
- KSAT
- Lynker
- Meetkai Inc.
- Ocean Power Technologies
- Orbital Micro Systems
- Phoenix Operations
- PlanetiQ
- Research and Education Coalition for Ocean Science
- SmallSat Alliance
- Spatial Informatics Group
- Spire Global
- Stephenson Technologies Corporation
- Ultra Safe Nuclear
- WindBorne Systems
- Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution
- Xerox Corp
- Xplore

C. LEGAL MATTERS

1. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics, professional misconduct, or retaliation by, or been the subject of a complaint to, any court, administrative agency, the Office of Special Counsel, an Inspector General, professional association, disciplinary committee, or other professional group? No.

2. Have you ever been investigated, arrested, charged, or held by any Federal, State, or other law enforcement authority of any Federal, State, county, municipal, or foreign government entity, other than for a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain.

Yes, in 2007 I was arrested for misdemeanor possession of marijuana during my freshman year of college. I was ordered to do community service and probation. I have since had my record expunged, however I do continue to list this offense on my SF-86 documentation. I have no other offenses.

3. Have you or any business or nonprofit of which you are or were an officer ever been involved as a party in an administrative agency proceeding, criminal proceeding, or civil litigation? If so, please explain. No.

4. Have you ever been convicted (including pleas of guilty or *nolo contendere*) of any criminal violation other than a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain. No.

5. Have you ever been accused, formally or informally, of sexual assault, sexual harassment, or discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or any other basis? If so, please explain. No.

6. Please advise the Committee of any additional information, favorable or unfavorable, which you feel should be disclosed in connection with your nomination. None.

D. RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMITTEE

1. Will you ensure that your department/agency/commission/corporation complies with deadlines for information set by congressional committees, and that your department/agency/commission/corporation endeavors to timely comply with requests for information from individual Members of Congress, including requests from members in the minority? Yes.

2. Will you ensure that your department/agency/commission/corporation does whatever it can to protect congressional witnesses and whistleblowers from reprisal for their testimony and disclosures? Yes.

3. Will you cooperate in providing the Committee with requested witnesses, including technical experts and career employees, with firsthand knowledge of matters of interest to the Committee? Yes.

4. Are you willing to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress on such occasions as you may be reasonably requested to do so? Yes.

TAYLOR ROSS JORDAN

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Principal | 01/2021 – Present |
| Innovative Federal Strategies | Washington, DC |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised clients and companies on a wide range of federal matters, including space policy, spectrum management, supply chain risk management, cybersecurity, atmosphere, climate, and environmental issues. • Developed and implemented Congressional strategies for engagement during the annual Appropriations process. Carried out strategies by engaging Member offices, Committee staff, agency personnel, and subject matter experts. • Supported robust engagement across the entire federal ecosystem for client priorities and programs. • Produced briefings, issue papers, technical amendments, testimony, and Appropriations/Authorizations Committee request forms. • Strengthened clients' political impact through targeted engagement with strategic stakeholders. • Tracked, in real-time, pertinent legislation affecting client priorities and worked with Congressional supports to obtain favorable outcomes. | |
| Senior Policy Advisor | 01/2018 – 12/2020 |
| U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration | Washington, DC |
| <i>Security Clearance: Top Secret – Secret Compartmented Information (TS/SCI)</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised the Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere (NOAA Administrator) on all political and policy priorities, strategies, and opportunities. • Oversaw budget formulation and allocation of resources to implement and carry out policy objectives of the Administration, including improvement and investment in weather forecasting, emerging technologies, and next generation satellite architecture. • Worked closely with Secretary of Commerce to develop and implement Department-wide budget priorities. • Managed top Agency programs and priorities such as supporting the Blue Economy, reducing the seafood trade deficit, and sparking space innovation. • Engaged with stakeholder communities, including the weather enterprise, satellite industry, and commercial fishermen, to promote and build support for Agency goals and objectives. | |
| Professional Staff | 01/2011 – 12/2017 |
| U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Science, Space, and Technology | Washington, DC |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Served as environmental subject matter expert for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Global Change Research Program, Environmental Protection Agency, and other Executive Branch science activities. • Led hearings, legislation, and oversight related to environmental regulations, climate change, and research and development programs. • Developed policy agendas, legislation, speeches, opinion editorials, and Committee reports for Members of Congress on energy and environment issues. • Advised Members of Congress on legislative policies and strategies. | |

EDUCATION

- | | |
|--|---------|
| M.S., Johns Hopkins University, Energy and Climate | 12/2014 |
| B.A., University of North Texas, International Relations | 12/2010 |

**Addendum to the questionnaire submitted to the Senate Committee on
Commerce, Science, and Transportation, 119th Congress by Taylor Jordan.**

Upon further review, I have identified additional pieces of information that are responsive to questions on the Committee's questionnaire. They are:

Minority Questions:

- **A.15** – We have identified political contributions that appear to be from Mr. Jordan and not disclosed. See below. Please conduct a thorough search and provide a supplement as appropriate.
 - Never Surrender, Inc., 9/6/24 - \$234
 - Donald J. Trump for President, 9/29/20 - \$500 (questionnaire discloses a contribution in this amount/date only to “Trump Victory”)
 - Donald J. Trump for President, 2/24/20 - \$1,041 (questionnaire discloses a contribution in this amount/date only to “Trump Victory”)
 - **Clarification:** Each of these contributions were disclosed on my questionnaire submission to the Committee. The FEC website indicates that the “Never Surrender” contribution and my disclosure of “Trump National Committee JFC” occurred on the same date, 9/6/2024. I only made one contribution on that day, which I have confirmed on my bank statement and was charged the previously disclosed amount of \$260.25. The discrepancy of amounts between the two listings may be the result of selecting the option for the contributor to cover the credit card fee associated with the contribution. Regardless, one donation was made on this date.

The 09/29/2020 contribution to “Trump Victory” is listed on the FEC website as “Trump Victory” in the disclosed amount of \$250. I do not see another contribution with this date amounting to \$500. Likewise for the 02/24/2020 contribution, the FEC website lists the same disclosed amount of \$1041.98 two times, one to Trump Victory and one to Donald J. Trump for President Inc. I only made one contribution on this date and the entities are the same.

- **A.19** – We identified public statements attributable to Mr. Jordan in the past ten years relevant to his nomination that were not disclosed. See here: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/capital-weather-gang/wp/2016/12/12/a-decades-long-tri-state-water-war-killed-a-bipartisan-weather-bill-on-friday/>. Please confirm, determine if there are other responsive materials, and provide a supplement as appropriate.
 - **Clarification:** I confirm that I am quoted in this article. This article was written while the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act was being negotiated between the House and the Senate nearly 9 years ago.

I am also including another article from 8 years ago. This article is a staffer profile piece that does not discuss NOAA. Link: <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/1552741/congressional-staffer-profile-for-taylor-jordan-slashing-epa-regs-is-music-to-his-ears/>

Majority Questions:

- **A.6** – Please disclose the name of your fiancé, her employer, and her position in response to Part A, Question 6.
 - **Clarification:** My fiancée’s name is **Minsu Crowder-Han**. Her position is UK Program Manager, Defense Programs, National Nuclear Security Administration.
- **A.12** – You said you have been a member of the American Meteorological Society since 2024. Please disclose that in response to Part A, Question 12.
 - **Clarification:** While I have participated in several American Meteorological Society (AMS) panels over the years, I was not an official dues paying member. I became an official member of AMS in December 2023.
- **C.4** – Please supplement your response to Part C, Question 4 so that it is consistent with Part C, Question 2.
 - **Clarification:** Yes, my misdemeanor offense listed in C.2 is my only offense and I pleaded guilty.

The undersigned certifies that the information contained in the public addendum is true and correct.

Signed  Date: June 6, 2025

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Mr. Kumar.

**STATEMENT OF HARRY KUMAR, NOMINEE TO BE AN
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR
LEGISLATIVE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS**

Mr. KUMAR. Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and distinguished members of the Senate Commerce Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs.

I am deeply grateful to President Trump for my nomination, to Secretary Lutnick for his leadership of the Department, and to this committee for its consideration of my nomination. Before I begin, I want to express my deepest gratitude to those joining me here today, including my parents, Drs. Nat and Saku Kumar, whose unwavering support and example have profoundly shaped my commitment to public service.

And my better half, Ali, whose love, encouragement, and support have been my foundation throughout this journey. I am a native Texan who grew up in the Southeast Texas town of Beaumont. I was fortunate to be raised in a community that taught me the value of hard work, determination, and service.

And I am grateful to have the support of countless family and friends who have helped shape my journey to this point. My heart remains with my home state and to all those affected in the wake of last weekend's tragic events.

I come before you filled with both humility and a strong sense of purpose. I believe my accumulated experience, including my prior work, in legislative affairs at the Department of Commerce during President Trump's first term, and as a staffer in this body, will serve me well in faithfully executing the responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary position.

In previous roles across both the Legislative and Executive branches, I have worked to build bipartisan consensus, navigate complex environments, and strengthen the relationship between government and the communities it serves. If confirmed, I will bring that same approach to the Assistant Secretary role, grounded in transparency, responsiveness, and collaboration.

The Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs plays a vital role in connecting the Department's work with Congress, State and local governments, and tribal partners. If confirmed, I will focus on three key priorities. Number one, timely responsiveness. Prioritizing clear, proactive communication with Members of Congress and their staff. Number two, intergovernmental partnership.

Deepening coordination with Governors, Mayors, and tribal leaders to ensure that the opportunities and challenges facing communities are understood by the Commerce Department. And number three, bipartisan collaboration. Working across the aisle to achieve the goals shared by all Americans, such as economic growth, revitalizing U.S. manufacturing, and protecting American innovation.

Across the Department's diverse mission, from supporting U.S. exporters and small businesses, to safeguarding critical supply chains and our domestic seafood industry, success depends on

strong relationships. I believe that effective public policy is built through engagement, trust, and shared accountability.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Commerce Department is a reliable partner to Congress and to governments at every level. In closing, I am deeply grateful for the Committee's consideration of my nomination. I wholeheartedly believe in the mission of the Department of Commerce, which is to create the conditions for economic growth and opportunity for all communities.

I look forward to working closely with members of this committee to strengthen that mission. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement and biographical information of Mr. Kumar follow:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HARRY KUMAR, NOMINEE FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF COMMERCE FOR LEGISLATIVE AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Chairman Cruz, Ranking Member Cantwell, and distinguished Members of the Senate Commerce Committee:

I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee to serve as Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs. I am deeply grateful to President Trump for my nomination, to Secretary Lutnick for confidence in me, and to this Committee for its consideration of my nomination.

Before I begin, I want to express my deepest gratitude to those joining me today, including my parents, whose unwavering support and example have profoundly shaped my commitment to public service, and my better half, Ali, whose love, encouragement, and support have been my foundation throughout this journey. Additionally, I am very grateful to have the support of countless family and friends who have helped shape my journey to this point.

I am a native Texan who was born in Houston and grew up in Southeast Texas, in the town of Beaumont. I was fortunate to be raised in a community that taught me the value of hard work, humility, and service and am forever grateful for the community that helped raise me.

I come before you filled with both humility and a strong sense of purpose. I believe my accumulated experience—including my prior work in Legislative Affairs at the Department of Commerce during President Trump's first term and as a staffer in this body—will serve me well in faithfully executing the responsibilities of the Assistant Secretary Position.

In previous roles—across both the legislative and executive branches—I have worked to build bipartisan consensus, navigate complex environments, and strengthen the relationship between government and the communities it serves. If confirmed, I will bring that same approach to the Assistant Secretary role grounded in transparency, responsiveness, and collaboration.

The Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs plays a vital role in connecting the Department's work with Congress, state and local governments, and tribal partners. If confirmed, I will focus on three key priorities:

1. Timely responsiveness—prioritizing clear, proactive communication with members of Congress and their staff.
2. Intergovernmental partnership—deepening coordination with governors, mayors, and tribal leaders to ensure that the opportunities and challenges facing communities are understood by the Commerce Department.
3. Bipartisan collaboration—working across the aisle to achieve the goals shared by all Americans, such as economic growth, revitalizing U.S. manufacturing, and protecting American innovation.

Across the Department's diverse mission—from supporting U.S. exporters and small businesses to safeguarding critical supply chains and our domestic seafood industry—success depends on strong relationships. I believe that effective public policy is built through engagement, trust, and shared accountability.

If confirmed, I will work to ensure that the Commerce Department is a reliable partner to Congress and to governments at every level. That includes ensuring timely and accurate information, engaging state and local voices in Federal policy-making, and building a culture of openness and respect.

In closing, I am deeply grateful for the Committee's consideration of my nomination. I wholeheartedly believe in the mission of the Department of Commerce, which is to create the conditions for economic growth and opportunity for all communities, and in the value of principled, responsive government. I look forward to working closely with members of this Committee to strengthen that mission.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1. Name (Include any former names or nicknames used): Harry Haran Kumar.
2. Position to which nominated: Assistant Secretary for Office of Legislative & Intergovernmental Affairs.
3. Date of Nomination: 3/10/2025.
4. Address (List current place of residence and office addresses):

Residence: Information not released to the public.

Office: Information not provided.

5. Date and Place of Birth: 12/15/1987; Houston, Texas.
6. Provide the name, position, and place of employment for your spouse (if married) or domestic partner, and the names and ages of your children (including step-children and children by a previous marriage).

Alexandra Jasien, Senior Manager, Chanel.

7. List all college and graduate schools attended, whether or not you were granted a degree by the institution. Provide the name of the institution, the dates attended, the degree received, and the date of the degree.

- Texas A&M University, August 2007–May 2010, Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, degree granted in May 2010.
- Texas Tech University School of Law, August 2010–May 2013, Doctor of Jurisprudence, degree granted in May 2013.

8. List all post-undergraduate employment, including the job title, name of employer, and inclusive dates of employment, and highlight all management-level jobs held and any non-managerial jobs that relate to the position for which you are nominated.

- Public Policy Fellowship, Consumer Energy Alliance (June 2011–August 2011)
- Attorney, Toepfich & Associates, (September 2013–November 2014)
- Legislative and Policy Aide, HBW Resources (November 2014–April 2015)
- Legislative Counsel for Rep. Randy Weber (April 2015–March 2017)
- Legislative Assistant for Sen. Marco Rubio (March 2017–November 2019)
- Associate Director of Legislative Affairs at Dept of Commerce (November 2019–January 2021)
- Director of Government Relations, Li-Cycle (March 2021–January 2025)
- Senior Advisor, Department of Commerce (January 2025 to current)

9. Attach a copy of your résumé.

Attached.

10. List any advisory, consultative, honorary, or other part-time service or positions with Federal, State, or local governments, other than those listed above after 18 years of age.

Not applicable.

11. List all positions held as an officer, director, trustee, partner, proprietor, agent, representative, or consultant of any corporation, company, firm, partnership, or other business, enterprise, educational, or other institution.

Not applicable.

12. List all memberships you have had after 18 years of age or currently hold with any civic, social, charitable, educational, political, professional, fraternal, benevolent or religiously affiliated organization, private club, or other membership organization (You do not have to list your religious affiliation or membership in a religious house of worship or institution). Include dates of membership and any positions you have held with any organization. Please note whether any such club or organization restricts membership on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability.

- Sigma Phi Epsilon, Texas A&M University (April 2008–May 2010)
- American Swiss Foundation (October 2023 to present)

13. Have you ever been a candidate for and/or held a public office (elected, non-elected, or appointed)? If so, indicate whether any campaign has any outstanding debt, the amount, and whether you are personally liable for that debt.

Not applicable.

14. List all memberships and offices held with and services rendered to, whether compensated or not, any political party or election committee within the past ten years. If you have held a paid position or served in a formal or official advisory position (whether compensated or not) in a political campaign within the past ten years, identify the particulars of the campaign, including the candidate, year of the campaign, and your title and responsibilities.

Not applicable.

15. Itemize all political contributions to any individual, campaign organization, political party, political action committee, or similar entity of \$200 or more for the past ten years.

Not applicable.

16. List all scholarships, fellowships, honorary degrees, honorary society memberships, military medals, and any other special recognition for outstanding service or achievements.

Eagle Scout Award Recipient (2006)

17. List all books, articles, columns, letters to the editor, Internet blog postings, or other publications you have authored, individually or with others. Include a link to each publication when possible. If a link is not available, provide a digital copy of the publication when available.

- Article: Developing a Sustainable Advanced-Battery Supply Chain Through Innovative Critical Mineral Recycling, Zero Emission Transportation Association (ZETA), 7/19/2021.

18. List all speeches, panel discussions, and presentations (*e.g.*, PowerPoint) that you have given on topics relevant to the position for which you have been nominated. Include a link to each publication when possible. If a link is not available, provide a digital copy of the speech or presentation when available.

- Panel: Better Batteries: Equity & Environmental Impacts Roadmap Conference, 6/29/2022 <https://www.roadmapforthe.org/RM22/speaker/462287/harry-kumar>
- Presentation: Annual Meeting, National Association of State Energy Officials, 10/2021. No hyperlink available.
- Panel: Unlocking the Value of Secondary Cobalt, Cobalt Congress 5/14/2024. <https://www.cobaltinstitute.org/programme-2024/>.

19. List all public statements you have made during the past ten years, including statements in news articles and radio and podcasts and television appearances, which are on topics relevant to the position for which you have been nominated, including dates. Include a link to each statement when possible. If a link is not available, provide a digital copy of the statement when available.

Not applicable.

20. List all digital platforms (including social media and other digital content sites) on which you currently or have formerly operated an account, regardless of whether or not the account was held in your name or an alias. Include the full name of an “alias” or “handle”, including the complete URL and username with hyperlinks, you have used on each of the named platforms. Indicate whether the account is active, deleted, or dormant. Include a link to each account if possible.

Instagram: @haroldnkumar87; active; <https://www.instagram.com/haroldnkumar87/>

Facebook: Harry Kumar; active; <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=27432578>

Twitter: @harrykumar87; active; <https://x.com/HarryKumar87>

LinkedIn: Harry Kumar; active; <https://www.linkedin.com/in/harry-kumar-29142585/>

21. Please identify each instance in which you have testified orally or in writing before Congress in a governmental or non-governmental capacity and specify the date, committee, and subject matter of each testimony.

Not applicable.

22. Given the current mission, major programs, and major operational objectives of the department/agency/commission/corporation to which you have been nominated, what in your background or employment experience do you believe affirmatively qualifies you for appointment to the position for which you have been nominated, and why do you wish to serve in that position?

I have significant experience in legislative and congressional engagement, including prior service at the Department of Commerce in the Office of Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs as Associate Director. I also have served in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, so I have had the privilege of working in both chambers and gaining an understanding of the rules and functions of each.

23. What do you believe are your responsibilities, if confirmed, to ensure that the department/agency/commission/corporation has proper management and accounting controls, and what experience do you have in managing a large organization?

I believe the responsibilities of this position include advising the Secretary and members of the Commerce organization on the Department's relationships with members of Congress, committees, and staff. Proper management includes ensuring that systems are in place to track incoming congressional requests and ensuring that communication with Congress is always prioritized. My prior experience as Associate Director of Legislative Affairs at the Department of Commerce helped me gain significant experience in understanding the processes and accounting measures needed to ensure the Legislative Affairs Office at Commerce is being responsive to Congress and proactive when possible.

24. What do you believe to be the top three challenges facing the department/agency/commission/corporation, and why?

The top three challenges facing the Department are strengthening domestic supply chains and economic security, AI and emerging technology regulation, and trade policy and global economic competition. Regarding domestic supply chains, the U.S. needs to reduce its reliance on foreign sources, particularly China, for advanced manufacturing like semiconductors and critical minerals.

Regarding AI and emerging tech, the Commerce Department plays an important role in ensuring a cohesive strategy is implemented to promote innovation while balancing against strategic geopolitical risks with the use of export controls. Finally, trade policy is an area where the Commerce Department plays a leading role in advising the President on both trade enforcement and promotion.

B. POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

1. Describe all financial arrangements, deferred compensation agreements, and other continuing dealings with business associates, clients, or customers. Please include information related to retirement accounts, such as a 401(k) or pension plan.

I have a Schwab investment account and 401k account that is managed by Schwab investment advisors. I also have a 401k account from my employment with Li-Cycle that is made up of broad-based index investments, and I have not had any interaction with that account since I started at the Department of Commerce.

2. Do you have any commitments or agreements, formal or informal, to maintain employment, affiliation, or practice with any business, association, or other organization during your appointment? If so, please explain. No.

3. Indicate any investments, obligations, liabilities, or other relationships which could involve potential conflicts of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

Not applicable.

4. Describe any business relationship, dealing, or financial transaction which you have had during the last ten years, whether for yourself, on behalf of a client, or acting as an agent, that could in any way constitute or result in a possible conflict of interest in the position to which you have been nominated. Explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

Not applicable.

5. Identify any other potential conflicts of interest and explain how you will resolve each potential conflict of interest.

I have worked with the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) at the Department of Commerce to provide a complete list of my prior employment and finances. In consultation with OGE, I have recused myself from matters pertaining to Li-Cycle where I previously was employed and Chanel where my fiancée is currently employed.

6. Describe any activity during the past ten years, including the names of clients represented, in which you have been engaged for the purpose of directly or indirectly influencing the passage, defeat, or modification of any legislation or affecting the administration and execution of law or public policy.

At Li-Cycle, I worked on policy matters related to clean energy and battery recycling. This included helping provide oral and written feedback on various legislative efforts, including IRA related tax provisions. No work was done specifically to influ-

ence the passage or defeat of any bill but was done on a few occasions to provide Li-Cycle's feedback on policy items of interest.

C. LEGAL MATTERS

1. Have you ever been disciplined or cited for a breach of ethics, professional misconduct, or retaliation by, or been the subject of a complaint to, any court, administrative agency, the Office of Special Counsel, an Inspector General, professional association, disciplinary committee, or other professional group? If yes:

- a. Provide the name of the court, agency, association, committee, or group;
- b. Provide the date the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action was issued or initiated;
- c. Describe the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action;
- d. Provide the results of the citation, disciplinary action, complaint, or personnel action.

Not applicable.

2. Have you ever been investigated, arrested, charged, or held by any Federal, State, or other law enforcement authority of any Federal, State, county, municipal, or foreign government entity, other than for a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain.

- Yes, I received citations for a minor in possession of alcohol and for public intoxication in 2007. I was having a beer on a friend's dock at a lake house and game wardens saw us and gave us citations. For my public intoxication ticket, an officer noticed I was under the influence and arrested me. I was charged public intoxication but received deferred adjudication after completing a required alcohol awareness class and community service.

3. Have you or any business or nonprofit of which you are or were an officer ever been involved as a party in an administrative agency proceeding, criminal proceeding, or civil litigation? If so, please explain. None.

4. Have you ever been convicted (including pleas of guilty or *nolo contendere*) of any criminal violation other than a minor traffic offense? If so, please explain.

None besides the above mentioned.

5. Have you ever been accused, formally or informally, of sexual assault, sexual harassment, or discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, or any other basis? If so, please explain. None.

6. Please advise the Committee of any additional information, favorable or unfavorable, which you feel should be disclosed in connection with your nomination. None.

D. RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMITTEE

1. Will you ensure that your department/agency/commission/corporation complies with deadlines for information set by congressional committees, and that your department/agency/commission/corporation endeavors to timely comply with requests for information from individual Members of Congress, including requests from members in the minority? Yes.

2. Will you ensure that your department/agency/commission/corporation does whatever it can to protect congressional witnesses and whistleblowers from reprisal for their testimony and disclosures? Yes.

3. Will you cooperate in providing the Committee with requested witnesses, including technical experts and career employees, with firsthand knowledge of matters of interest to the Committee? Yes.

4. Are you willing to appear and testify before any duly constituted committee of the Congress on such occasions as you may be reasonably requested to do so? Yes.

HARRY H. KUMAR

EXPERIENCE

The United States Department of Commerce (January 2025-Present) Washington, D.C.

Senior Advisor, Office of the Secretary

- Advise the Secretary on several matters involving Commerce Department equities including corporate outreach, congressional outreach, and policy priorities
- Meet with businesses of all sizes to discuss various Commerce Department policy issues of interest, including trade and telecommunications issues
- Serve as a point of contact for congressional and industry inquiries and help facilitate communication and meetings with the appropriate personnel within the Department

Li-Cycle Holdings (March 2021-January 2025)

Washington, D.C., NYC

Director of Government Relations, Americas

- Advocate and promote for Li-Cycle by leading the company's public policy efforts on all relevant policy areas, including clean energy, tax, trade, labor and related issues before public officials, agencies and regulators
- Established Li-Cycle's political footprint within North America and oversee all related engagement by building direct relationships with Members of Congress and Canadian Parliament, state and local legislators, governor's offices, trade associations, grassroot organizations, and the broader business community
 - Successfully led Li-Cycle efforts to host several high-profile government visitors at its facilities, including Heads of State, Governors, Cabinet Officials, Governors, Senators, and Congressmen
- Collaborate internally and with third party organizations and associations to develop messaging and strategy on key policy issues

The United States Department of Commerce (November 2019-January 2021)

Washington, D.C.

Associate Director for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs (Eligible for Top Secret Clearance)

- Manages and coordinates all interactions of Commerce Department bureaus with the House of Representatives and Senate offices and committees
- Works with senior congressional staff to alter and improve proposed legislation that runs counter to the mission of the Department of Commerce and the Administration at large
- Serves as the interagency legislative point of contact for all matters related to certain bureaus including the International Trade Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Telecommunications and Information Administration, Office of Space Commerce
- Coordinates closely and manages oversight inquiries originating from the House of Representatives or Senate with our Office of General Counsel and respective bureaus
- Brief Members of Congress and Congressional staff on relevant issues and policies within the Department of Commerce, including 232 tariffs, anti-dumping and countervailing duty decisions, and duty suspension agreements

United States Senate (March 2017-November 2019)

Washington, D.C.

Legislative Assistant to Senator Marco Rubio

- Acted as the principal advisor to the Senator on telecommunications, transportation, space, consumer protection, FEMA, disaster relief, and flood insurance issues
- Served as Associate Staff for the Senator on the Senate Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Subcommittee
- Acted as the principal advisor to the Senator in his role on the Senate Appropriations Committee on Department of Commerce funding and Department of Homeland Security Agency funding related to the Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Served as the Senator's liaison to constituents, interest groups, committee and agency staffs

- Monitored floor activity and drafted legislation in my portfolio to promote the Senator's domestic agenda

U.S. House of Representatives (April 2015-March 2017)

Washington, D.C.

Legislative Counsel to Congressman Randy Weber

- Collaborated with legislative team to draft and promote federal policy
- Advised and updated Congressman on natural resources, energy science, armed services, homeland security, veterans affairs, intelligence, telecommunications, small business and judiciary issues
- Monitored legislation on the House floor providing Congressman with research on each vote

HBW Resources, LLC (November 2014-April 2015) Texas/Washington, D.C.
Policy Assistant

- Conducted legal research and analysis of various Congressional and regulatory energy initiatives affecting all areas of the oil and gas supply chain

Steven S. Toepfich & Associates, PLLC (September 2013-November 2014) Houston, Texas
Attorney

- Represented upstream and midstream energy companies in transactional matters relating to oil and gas exploration, production, distribution and marketing

EDUCATION

Texas Tech University School of Law Lubbock, Texas
Doctor of Juris Prudence (May 2013)
 Admitted to the State Bar of Texas, November 2013

Texas A&M University College Station, Texas
Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, cum laude (May 2010)

AWARDS AND HONORS

- Eagle Scout Award Recipient

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Dr. Jacobs let's start with you. You and I discussed at length yesterday the flooding that occurred in Texas and the tragedy that unfolded. As the head of NOAA, which oversees the National Weather service, if confirmed, what will you do to better ensure that Americans are aware of and able to respond to emergency weather warnings, especially those that arrive in the middle of the night?

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question. As I said in my opening statement, numerical weather prediction and advancing that is a top priority. And, you know, the Weather Service did a great job, but there is a lot of things I would love to improve, obviously weather forecasting being one of them. I would also love to advance and modernize NOAA Weather Radio.

NOAA Weather Radio saved my life in 1996. There are a lot of other things we can do as far as communications, because as you said, even if the forecast is perfect, getting the warnings to the people, particularly at late hours of the night, is a challenge. I think we can do more advancements, moving away from copper wire, moving toward telecom, potentially satellite, to send out these messages. We also need more data in doing post-storm assessments.

One of the things that I have envisioned, because I have worked on several aviation accidents with NTSB, is something along the lines of what they do, but for weather disasters. Because we need the data to understand what went right, what went wrong, whether people got the warnings, if they did or didn't. And if they did, did they not understand them.

The CHAIRMAN. You mentioned that NOAA Weather Radio had saved your life. Would you elaborate on that and tell us what happened?

Mr. JACOBS. I was at a campsite in Florida with some friends, and it issued a tornado alert. And it was about 10 p.m., and this was back before I had a cell phone or smartphone, and I took out a gazetteer.

And I looked at the towns that it mentioned along the way, and I extrapolated the direction, which was right over where I knew we

were. And so, I drove around the campsite and held my horn down and told as many people as I could to leave, and everyone left.

We went further down the coast to a hospital and went into the emergency room because it was the closest brick building. When we went back to the campsite, it was nothing but bare dirt.

The CHAIRMAN. Wow. In 2017, Hurricane Harvey devastated entire communities all up and down Texas' Gulf Coast. The damage to our state was well over \$120 billion and may prove to be closer to \$180 billion when all is said and done.

Texans prepare for hurricanes and flooding by using NOAA's weather forecasts. But European numerical weather prediction models have been outperforming U.S. models in forecasting. It is a question for both Dr. Jacobs and Mr. Jordan. If confirmed, how do you plan to close the gap and ensure that NOAA's forecasts are the best in the world?

Mr. JACOBS. Closing the gap is going to require a mix of collecting more and better observations because these prediction are initial value problems. They all start from better observations. And then data assimilation. So, joint effort for data integration and data assimilation system.

One of the reasons why the Europeans have a better model than the U.S. is they use four dimensional variational data assimilation. The U.S. needs to advance its data assimilation where it can also consolidate its modeling systems across resolutions of time and space.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Jordan.

Mr. JORDAN. I agree with Dr. Jacobs. So of the pillars of creating a weather forecast, you have model code development, you have observations, you have data assimilation, and you have supercomputing or HPC to run the forecasts.

As far as observation goes, we absolutely need to push the technology stack forward and ingest new sources of data but, you know, the Europeans also have that same data. So, you know, what is the difference between the American modeling and the European modeling? It is—part of it is model code development and data assimilation.

And I think we need a targeted investment into data assimilation to make sure that we can push that ball forward and have a better weather forecast.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Jacobs, one of the things you and I talked about yesterday was your vision for expanding cloud computing for weather forecasting. Can you describe what you envision there?

Mr. JACOBS. Sure. So, one of the things that I think is—would be a tremendous leap forward for the National Weather Service is the system that they process the information on called AWIPS, they have to download the data locally.

And the higher resolution files get, whether it is data or model output, the longer it takes them to get that information. That is one issue. The other issue is they have to be behind the computer to do this work.

And I think transitioning this software to the cloud so they are actually uploading the code instead of downloading the data, as well as having the ability to have a laptop so they can access it from anywhere, it not only improves their ability to get the data

faster, but it would allow a forecaster from anywhere to do a forecast for anywhere.

The CHAIRMAN. And so, you were saying this would enable forecasters from the National Weather Service to embed an emergency operations center and be right there on the ground in a crisis?

Mr. JACOBS. Correct. Yes, they don't—they could literally work from anywhere. And so, embedding in the emergency management centers, particularly during major weather events, would be really advantageous.

The CHAIRMAN. OK, last question. It is an ongoing problem, particularly in South Texas, dealing with illegal Mexican fishermen, lanchas coming in and illegally fishing Texas red snapper. The Coast Guard fights against it. The Federal Government fights against it. This illegal fishing is actually paid for by Mexican drug cartels in many instances. Dr. Jacobs, what more can NOAA do to combat the problem of illegal fishing in Texas?

Mr. JACOBS. I appreciate the question. IUU fishing is another top priority of mine. As you know, just recently, 40 tons of red snapper were seized at a port in Brazil that were headed toward the U.S. As well as this last April, around 700 pounds of red snapper was seized just off of Brownsville from Mexican fishermen that were illegally fishing in U.S. waters. I think it is a mix of new technology. There are ways, when these boats turn off their transponders, to track them through satellites.

I also think as part of combating IUU, the Seafood Inspection Monitoring Program, beefing up that, actually looking at potentially—not just for like fishing, but like aquaculture things like shrimp that are brought into the U.S. A lot of people aren't aware, but almost all that shrimp is mislabeled. So, understanding the origins of the seafood.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much. Ranking Member Cantwell.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Following up a little bit on your line of questioning since you approached this. Certainly, Dr. Jacobs, as I mentioned in my opening statement, I am concerned about the 27 percent budget cuts, and particularly the Atmospheric—the Oceanic and Atmospheric Research Organization itself and the people.

But to get this right, following on Senator Cruz's questioning, you know, we had a less tragic event, but no less tragic event, out on the Olympic Peninsula. The NOAA Weather Forecast Service said, no, you don't need a Doppler. And we are like, yes, we do, because we have a mountain range that is blocking the information. The NOAA Weather Service said, no, you don't, and we said, yes we do. And then we had 100 year event that killed people and did unbelievable damage, and all of a sudden the NOAA Weather Forecaster said, yes, we are going to help you.

Actually, we helped get the Doppler. Now, we still have a community that we have information. But guess what? Every day we live there with the threat of a tsunami, and we have built a tower, but that is it. There is no real coordination with that community. I mean, the bottom line here is we have beautiful places around the United States of America, and people want to go visit them and live there—and they do.

But guess what? They are not the most resourced communities in our country. Then the question becomes, what do we do to provide the emergency response, whether it is fire, or hurricane, or tsunami, you know, or tornado—what do we do? Now, you mentioned the radio, and I want to get to that communication level.

But I want to start with just the basic research. Because at that same event, when we got the Doppler and we got tower, I said, so now we are done, right? And they were like, no, we are not done. I said well, why is that? They said, Senator, because every particle in a storm is its own algorithm, and we could be computing this, and we could tell you two weeks in advance what the storm is likely to do if we put in the supercomputing time.

So I have no idea why in heck our Nation lets the European model get ahead of us. I have no idea why we do this when all we need to do is use Senator Blackburn's supercomputing time at their national lab and put the resources behind it. So let's start with that. Should we be putting more resources into super-computing time so we can predict storms further out?

Mr. JACOBS. Well, obviously, high performance supercomputer—these physics based algorithms need a lot of it. And one of the things, one of priorities of mine is advancing numerical weather prediction.

But the reason why—one the reasons why the American model was lagging the European model was not just lack of compute, but the code wasn't architected to run on certain computers.

Senator CANTWELL. We are going to let somebody else—I am not letting somebody else out code us. OK, trust me. Coming from Seattle, I am not letting—that is—we—this is all doable. It is about whether—

Mr. JACOBS. Oh, I agree.

Senator CANTWELL.—we have the resources and the investment. And I am saying, let's make the investment. Let's—

Mr. JACOBS. I agree.

Senator CANTWELL. And you agree is what I am trying to get at. You agree, let's put the investment into this.

Mr. JACOBS. High performance computing, cloud-based high performance computing is critically important. Another thing I would like to point out is once we transition that code to architectures that even industry could run, now we have private industry investing in developing the same code.

Senator CANTWELL. OK. Look, I am all for that, but I want you to maintain your role. And I think that the difference here is—and we do that. Believe it or not, the University of Washington has probably helped this community plan for an eventual tsunami more than anybody has because they have outlined. So it comes to the second point, which I just want to drill down on, because we are having this problem now with not having these forecasters.

The fire situation I mentioned, we woke up one day and looked—the meteorologist from NOAA said, oh, I am over in Seattle and this all—this is, you know, here's—a totally different picture. Central Washington, because they didn't have a meteorologist in that region on the ground, predicted something else and sent people out.

Sent people out and they died, and because the fire was too volatile given the high winds. So we have been a big believer in having

that local meteorologist and having that coordination when you know what the local weather event is going to be. So you are not suggesting that we can do all of this some sort—regionally or through the private sector?

Mr. JACOBS. No, no, no.

Senator CANTWELL. OK. I want to clarify this because this is what is going on now when we shortchange resources. And I don't want for fire season to be shortchanging resources. These events come up in very dramatic form and can happen, and we need the accuracy.

And the last thing is, I want to see—I hope, given all of my experiences, and we also, you know, we have had a lot of natural disasters in the State of Washington. We had the Oso mudslide, which also killed 40 people. A lot less planning to do there, but weather event information could have probably put data out to the community.

But the point is, somewhere we all, we all collectively, have to come to a conclusion about what we are going to do when we have massive populations in communities that you actually have to have an implementation plan. So whose responsibility is that implementation plan?

And so, we see it all the time because the gap—NOAA says, OK, well, I am going to give you the information, and then it is a rural community, and they don't have the plan. So, as I said, University of Washington is filling that gap.

So, what can we do now that we have had 27 extreme events this year, what can we do to help communities get better plans?

Mr. JACOBS. Well, going back to your Weather Service question, if confirmed, I will ensure that staffing the Weather Service Office is its top priority. It is really important for the people to be there because they have relationships with the people in the local community. They are a trusted source. I didn't mean to imply that this was going to be regionalized or anything. As I mentioned—

Senator CANTWELL. Well, some people have suggested that the private sector, you could just do it in one location. And I am just trying to get to this point that this regional data and integration with the emergency responders is critical.

Mr. JACOBS. Oh, consolidating the data, not consolidating the people. I would love for the people to be more embedded in the community.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you. Thank you for that answer. Could you just tell me about stock assessment as in salmon and pac-surf, and your commitment to that?

Mr. JACOBS. Stock assessment is obviously a huge priority of mine. If confirmed, I will do everything I can to get them back on track. I realize that it is a sensitive issue because without the quotas set properly from the stock assessment data, the fishermen can't fish. It is a very important priority.

Senator CANTWELL. And pac-surf?

Mr. JACOBS. Yes. Pacific salmon, obviously critical to the culture, the economy, has my support. You know, if confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to advocate for this.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Moran.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JERRY MORAN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM KANSAS**

Senator MORAN. Mr. Chairman, thank you. And Kansans, we are all glued to the television, listening to the news, watching what transpired in Texas this weekend with great care and compassion, concern, and sympathy. And I share that with my fellow Kansans. We are not immune from significant weather events ourselves.

One of those weather events, Dr. Jacobs or Mr. Jordan, occurred in Kansas about a month ago. It was an EF3 tornado. When that tornado occurred, the Weather Forecast Offices in Kansas and across the country, some of them lacked 24/7 coverage given hiring freezes.

I worked with NOAA and the Department of Commerce to lift that Federal hiring freeze for meteorologists and other specialists to ensure uninterrupted service. Goodland, Kansas, which is on the Colorado line, the Western part of our state, was short meteorologists because of the hiring freeze, and we are bringing in or attempting to bring in other meteorologists from other National Weather Service Stations, Forecast Offices. I am pleased the freeze has been lifted.

Today's *Politico Magazine* has an article about that none of those positions have been posted for hiring. I don't know the veracity of that article, but can you bring any light to that in your past experience, or what needs to take place once the hiring freeze is lifted, but the positions are not yet filled?

Mr. JACOBS. I don't know the exact details of why that is because I am not there yet, but I really appreciate you advocating to lift the hiring freeze and getting that done. I also appreciate your legislation to classify them as public safety.

It is not a very quick process, but it is my understanding that the National Weather Service has direct hiring authority, which could expedite that. And also the potential to relocate people. So if confirmed, like I said, getting these offices staffed up will be a top priority.

Senator MORAN. Well, Dr. Jacobs, if you see any opportunity for me and others on this committee, or in our Appropriations process to help speed that along, please let me know.

And I was going to highlight for you what you already mentioned. Senator Peters, also a member of this committee, and an appropriator, we have introduced legislation, as you mentioned. And I appreciate your statement of support, as well as Mr. Jordan's head nodding.

So, thank you. What can I—what could you tell me about the technology and capabilities? We have four weather forecast offices in Kansas—Topeka, Dodge City, Goodland, and Wichita.

Would I expect that they would have the best technologies that are available and utilized across the country, or is there something different about rural Kansas, rural America that would diminish the capabilities that our forecasters have because of technology and equipment?

Mr. JACOBS. I don't believe there is anything unique to your region that would limit the technologies or capabilities.

My hope is that a lot of these technologies that would advance this are not just nationwide, but global, because as we transition

to a larger scale model, a global modeling system to lengthen the forecast horizon, we are going to need these technologies collecting data worldwide.

Senator MORAN. That is one of my goals in light of what has transpired on a number of occasions and—is to make certain that all Weather National Forecast Centers have the latest, best technologies, and would work with you and NOAA to achieve that. We are also interested in NOAA and NWS radars that are nearing their end of their life.

Several efforts are underway to recapitalize the system, including next gen—next generation radar. In addition to that, the hurricane hunter aircraft are essential tools for preparation for and preparing for severe weather and are in need of significant maintenance repair and overhaul or replacement.

Would you plan, as NOAA Administrator, to ensure these critical instruments are upgraded and replaced?

Mr. JACOBS. Yes.

Senator MORAN. And let me turn to Mr. Kumar. You have had no questions this morning. You must be a good bridge builder. I noticed for your alma maters are two universities in the State of Texas that I know are not necessarily friendly to each other.

So, I look forward to you using those circumstances to allow Congress and the Administration to work well together, and Republicans and Democrats to reach good conclusions. What I want to highlight for you is the Department of Commerce, including NOAA, has not completed its spend plan for this current fiscal year, last year's fiscal year.

So the appropriators do not have the data that is required by law for the Department of Commerce to provide us. And I would encourage you, if confirmed, to see if you can make that happen. And it is useful for us, certainly in our oversight of the Department of Commerce, but also in helping make decisions about where to make investments and what is taking place at the Department.

So would you commit to me that you would see that the Department of Commerce, including NOAA, follows the law. And that the spend plan, to the detail that it is required by law to be provided to the Appropriations Committee, will be provided?

Mr. KUMAR. Thank you for the question, Senator. Yes, I understand fully the importance of spend plans. And if confirmed, I will make sure to work with you and your office to ensure that you all are given the appropriate information as requested.

Senator MORAN. Thank you. Thank you all very much.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Kim.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ANDY KIM,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW JERSEY**

Senator KIM. Thank you, Chairman. And Chairman, I just want to start by just expressing my deep sadness for the tragedy in Texas. Just really horrific. And as I am a parent of a, you know, 7-year-old and 9-year-old, kids that are going to camp this summer, I mean, I know so many parents and families are—you know, are just so heartbroken and feel shattered by what has happened.

And I express the urgency of trying to figure out not only how we can better predict and have an early warning system, but how

to get that information out to people as quickly as possible. In my home state in New Jersey, you know, we suffered from Superstorm Sandy, from Hurricane Ida, other things like that.

Dr. Jacobs, you and I talked about this briefly but, you know, just building on what you talked to the Chairman and others about, these early warning systems, there has been talk about even using—you know, even just using sirens similar to what we have done for tornadoes in this country.

As far as I know, we don't—do you know of any usage of sirens when it comes to flooding in the United States at this point?

Mr. JACOBS. Not to my knowledge. But I do know that some systems that have been deployed in Spain and France, they essentially network a flow meter to a siren, and if the flow rate exceeds a certain amount, it triggers a siren. Depending on where the upstream rain falls and the rate of rain rate, it doesn't give you a whole lot of lead time, but it is certainly better than nothing.

Senator KIM. Even just a few seconds or a few minutes can make a huge difference. Is that something you would work with us here in Congress to think through and figure out how best to be able to deploy some of this?

Mr. JACOBS. Absolutely.

Senator KIM. Another part of this in terms of being able to understand where flooding might happen and what communities are most vulnerable is about hydrological modeling. And, you know, I worry about this because in New Jersey, we have had concerns about whether or not we are up to date with the latest modeling.

A lot of the models that we have seen sometimes use outdated data from decades ago. There has been talk about trying to invest in LiDAR technology. And I would like to get your thoughts on that, as well as whether or not that is something for the Federal Government to be able to take on?

Mr. JACOBS. I agree. I believe this is a Federal mission. A lot of it right now, the capability is state by state. So some states have more sophisticated data and flood inundation mapping than others.

Hydrological modeling is extremely challenging and technical because you are essentially using one model to initialize another. So the hydrological model could be perfect in its equations, and if the atmospheric model puts the rainstorm in the wrong place, then the secondary model is not going to be right.

So that is critical. But the hydrological models to be successful need the most updated digital elevation. And the only way I know to really get that data as accurate as possible is through LiDAR. So I think having access to LiDAR data to optimize that and having a nationwide flood inundation mapping capability would be very, very helpful.

Senator KIM. So it doesn't seem to make sense to me that we would have each state do their own, right. I mean, it could create so much asymmetry in the data. But having like a baseline Federal hydrological data that we can draw from, does that make sense to you? Am I thinking about it right?

Mr. JACOBS. It does make sense. And, you know, if the capability stops at the state border but the roads don't and you need to deploy assets on the other side of the state border, you need actually have that information.

Senator KIM. Especially when it comes to hurricanes, often affecting multiple states simultaneously. Am I correct that we don't necessarily have modeling that combines both the forecasting for hurricanes, as well with the hydrological data? We don't have modeling that combines the two, which seems like that would be incredibly important. Is that correct?

Mr. JACOBS. It is. So I will give you a great example of Hurricane Florence that made landfall in the Carolinas a few years ago.

It put down almost 36 inches of rain, but it also was in one place for almost 3 days, and so you have that storm surge, and the water from the rain can't drain East because the winds are pushing it West.

And those two models, the storm surge model and the hydrological models from the rainfall, need to be coupled.

Senator KIM. Yes. I want to switch gears here. I would like to just read a sentence here and get your thoughts on it. It is a quote, "it is extremely likely that human activities, especially emissions of greenhouse gasses, are the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century.

For the warming over the last century, there is no convincing alternative explanation supported by the extent of the observational evidence." I just wanted to get your thoughts if you agree with that statement or not.

Mr. JACOBS. Well, obviously, there is a lot of natural signals that are mixed in there, too. And so, in the absence of any natural signals that might dominate that, yes, sir, there is human influences certainly there.

Senator KIM. So you see human influence being part of the concern when it comes to climate change, when it comes to extreme weather?

Mr. JACOBS. Yes, there is influence.

Senator KIM. Yes. I think it is important for us to just be able to think that through, because as we are trying to assess predictions and trying to do forecasts, it is important to understand causality.

And we are just trying to understand what is causing the warming of ocean temperatures that affect hurricane strength and other aspects of this. So I just want to continue to make sure that we are pushing this forward.

We are letting science drive our decisionmaking in so many ways. So I hope that that is something you can commit to if you are confirmed. Thank you, and I yield back.

Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER [presiding]. Thank you, Senator Kim. Senator Blackburn, you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE**

Senator BLACKBURN. Thank you. I appreciate that, and congratulations to each of you on your nominations. I know you will get through this process, and we look forward to having you confirmed and getting hard to work for the American people.

Mr. Jordan, I want to come to you. And Senator Cantwell mentioned Oak Ridge National Lab. The supercomputing capacity, the fastest in the country. And of course, NOAA and Oak Ridge have

had a partnership that they have been working on that—trying to do some modeling on predictions for disasters and severe weather events.

And I think that these collaborations are important for the American people and for helping us to come past some of these extreme weather events and to be able to avoid some of the catastrophes that we have seen. We all are grieving for those families in Texas, and what a catastrophic loss.

And then we, just late September last year, when Hurricane Helene stalled out there between North Carolina and Tennessee, and we had eight counties in Tennessee, we had rivers cresting as high as 29 feet, 20 feet, 19 feet, 15 feet, and tremendous loss of life. And we are still reeling, and the rebuilding is taking place.

Debris removal is still taking place. So the impact is felt for years and years. It takes so much time to recover. So I want to return to some of these partnerships that can help us, and I would like for you to talk a little bit about how you would prioritize partnerships like the one between NOAA and Oak Ridge National Labs so that we are better able to predict what is taking place?

Mr. JORDAN. Thank you for the question, Senator. So I agree, the partnership with Oak Ridge and NOAA is a very important one. And I look forward to working with you and the Committee and NOAA to strengthen that partnership so that we can utilize the expertise at Oak Ridge to run our models and do the research to make sure we have the best forecast. And then again, as you were mentioning, push that information to local decisionmakers to take action. We need to—

Senator BLACKBURN. OK. And drill down for a minute on that data transfer to these local EMS, these local first responders. They are always the first ones that show up. It is followed by the State, and then followed by the Federal Government. But drill down on that partnership.

Mr. JORDAN. Absolutely. So thank you for that. So it is important to, again, get as close as possible to the local emergency managers, and in some instances, weather service employees embed with emergency managers because they have the local expertise to know specifics of topography and how things can be affected.

Senator BLACKBURN. So you would encourage that embedding?

Mr. JORDAN. Yes, Senator.

Senator BLACKBURN. OK. Thank you. Dr. Jacobs, I want to come to you. Memphis, the lower Mississippi River is the lifeblood of barge traffic and port commerce, not only for Tennessee, but also the entire mid-South, and the Mississippi River area.

How would you ensure NOAA's forecasting tools for river navigation services and data, such as water level forecasts, sediment mapping, navigation charts, and so that they are supporting the needs of the ports and the barge operators in the lower Mississippi River?

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question. So the Ocean Service does an amazing job with their PORTS Program, as well as running a lot of models.

So River Forecast Centers, the National Water Center run the water models for this. And there is a lot of development on coastal model, as well as the gap sensors. I myself spend a lot of time

using their data with my boat. So it is very, very important—very high priority.

Senator BLACKBURN. OK. And I have one other question for you. Senator Cruz and I wrote to NOAA urging it to recognize the critical role of undersea cables and their necessity in our communications infrastructure.

And the cables undergo rigorous State and Federal permitting, as you are well aware, and they have proven time and again to have a minimal environmental footprint. So in response to those concerns, NOAA instituted a two-year pause on special use permits for submarine cables in newly designated marine sanctuaries so that it could review the category.

And in line with this Administration's efforts to streamline permitting, do you agree that NOAA should permanently exempt undersea cable deployment, maintenance, and repair from duplicative sanctuary-specific permitting requirements that risk delaying infrastructure deployment and undermining our national resilience?

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question. Because I am not there, I don't have access to that information. But if confirmed, I would definitely love to learn more about it and support the priorities as best I can.

Senator BLACKBURN. Thank you. I yield back.

**STATEMENT OF HON. LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM DELAWARE**

Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER. Thank you, Senator Blackburn. And I now recognize myself. First of all, thank you so much to the nominees for being here and your families. Dr. Jacob, great conversation yesterday.

I didn't share with you, but I assume you know this. I represent Delaware, which is the lowest mean elevation State in the country. So for us, Delawareans are deeply, deeply concerned about rising sea levels, inland flooding and, like the rest of the country, extreme heat. It doesn't appear these things are going away.

And so to me, it is vitally important the conversation you had with Senator Kim about making sure that this is science-based and that we recognize the impacts of climate change are a priority. And as I did share, I am concerned about cuts to NOAA.

Gutting NOAA is a costly mistake that Americans will pay the price through rising home insurance rates, destroyed communities, and in some cases, their lives. And again, I hope there is a real focus on this, and that NOAA gets the support that it needs.

And as the Ranking Member of the Coast Guard, Maritime, and Fishery Subcommittee, I understand the role that NOAA plays in safeguarding our marine ecosystems, supporting our coastal communities, and enforcing laws against illegal, unreported, and unregulated, or IUU, fishing. Right now, NOAA's capacity to do this work is under serious threat.

The Office of Marine and Aviation Operations is currently short 180 mariners, and without an exemption from the hiring freeze, as was discussed, 30 percent of NOAA's research fleet will remain docked this summer.

In a recent subcommittee hearing on IUU fishing, I asked the witnesses, Democrats and Republicans, what the impact of a 30

percent cut to NOAA's enforcement would mean for tracking and prosecuting illegal activity on the high seas, and the responses that all of them painted were very bleak.

Dr. Jacobs, what is your plan to mitigate this loss of operational capacity, and how will you ensure NOAA can deliver on its scientific mission with such a reduced fleet?

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question. So I definitely understand your concerns, and I think it is—you know, if confirmed, I will get in there and really take a look at the staffing levels, because there is a difference between the wage mariners and the law enforcement when it comes to IUU fishing.

And I also understand that the issue with the wage mariners and not having the hiring freeze lift is challenging, particularly in this market because it is so competitive with industry for the same jobs.

So my approach, if confirmed, would be to focus on making sure that we try to get the wage mariner situation sorted out, as well as looking at other options, potentially autonomous vehicles to do certain fish surveys if we can use those instead. So would definitely appreciate working with you on this.

Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER. Look forward to it as well. Mr. Kumar, as the nominee of the Office of Legislative Affairs, you will serve as the primary liaison to Congress. It is such an important role.

And one of your core functions is to ensure timely and substantive responses as we exercise our oversight role on behalf of the American people. I have to say I have been frustrated by the lack of response of letters that I have sent.

In the last six months, I have sent eight letters to the Secretary of Commerce on a variety of topics, from the implementation of the Broadband Equity Access Deployment Program to the abrupt restructuring of the Minority Business Development Agency.

But I haven't received a substantive response yet. I am just going to ask, are you familiar with the letters that we sent to the Department?

Mr. KUMAR. Thank you for the question, Senator. Yes, I am at a high level, yes.

Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER. At a high level. And I wanted to know when do you think I could receive a response or do you—is this going to be a priority of your job?

Mr. KUMAR. Yes. If confirmed, you know, as I said in my opening statement, I understand fully the importance of timely information being provided back to the Committee and its members. I know MBDA, I know there is broad active litigation going on, but even in those instances, I would like to at least be able to communicate what we can and can't say on a matter and making sure you are getting information back.

Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER. So I brought the letters with me, so I will give them to you afterwards, because I would really love some substantive responses, not the kind of form letter response.

Would love to follow up with you on that, should you be confirmed. And Dr. Jacobs, just to pivot back to seafood fraud and mislabeling. I have some questions for you, but what specific tech steps would you take to strengthen NOAA's efforts to combat sea-

food fraud? And what role should technology, traceability, and interagency enforcement play in the efforts?

Mr. JACOBS. Well, as far as technology goes, one of the things that I found pretty interesting is a lot of these vessels, and sometimes they are flagged under other nations, will be fishing in our EEZ. They will turn off their transponders, come in, illegally fish our waters, and then go back out.

And we can actually see them on satellite imagery. So there is a way to trace them down. And working potentially with the Navy and the Coast Guard on this I think would be great. As far as the actual import monitoring, one of the things that I have been interested in is actually doing genetic analysis on certain seafood products because we can trace the origins of it then.

Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER. I want to end with something we discussed in my office, which was the Sea Grant Program. I think it is a vitally important program, particularly for communities across this country, including U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam. It is one of those things that really helps the communities. You talked about the big data.

If we have the data but people don't understand how they can apply it and use it, how it could help with economic development, how it can help with resiliency and making sure that our communities are safe, it does us no good. And so, in our meeting, I was pleased to hear you say "this program is awesome." Those were your words, awesome.

And so, I am imploring you to make sure that this program protected, because again, it does so much for our local communities, for our business opportunities, and really to make sure that folks are safe. And so, I thank you for that. I am actually going to yield back time myself, and I will follow up with additional questions. But I will now recognize Senator Capito.

**STATEMENT OF HON. SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WEST VIRGINIA**

Senator CAPITO. Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you all for being here, for your willingness to serve. And I would like to start with Dr. Jacobs. Thank you again for our meeting yesterday and our previous meetings in past years.

We talked about NOAA's Environmental Security Computing Center, NESCC, in Fairmont, West Virginia at the Tech Park, in the I-79 Tech Park. And as you know that center received \$100 million for the high-performance computer called Raya to support NOAA's widespread adoption of AI.

The I-79 Tech Park in Fairmont is a unique asset for NOAA and the broader adoption of AI, and the Park houses the supercomputing operation with the high-performance computers named Hera and Raya. I like that they are female names, but that is just me. And Raya should be operational by 2020.

I won't ask you to comment on that. Raya will be operational in 2026. What is your vision? Obviously, we hear AI in every single aspect of testimony, no matter what we are talking about, whether it is finances or health care or whatever, and we see this also in— at NOAA. How do you feel—what is your vision for the institu-

tionalization of AI at NOAA, and how would you use these assets that I have referenced?

Mr. JACOBS. Very much appreciate the question. And it is great to see that HPC finally get installed and operational. Because the last time I was at NOAA, we actually got half of that data center built out. I think there is a lot of opportunity with AI everywhere, from like improving some stock assessments and fisheries, to also in numerical weather prediction.

So right now, there are AI-based models that just completely replicate the entire modeling system. They are trained on the physics-based model, so there is still a need to run the physics-based models.

But there is also aspects of AI that can be used inside the physics based-models, where the AI systems replicate some of these physical algorithms. And the exciting thing to me is, they can do it in a fraction of a second.

So what 5 years ago would take 30, 40 minutes, we can do now in a second or two. And I think doing a lot of that development work, particularly on that system, would be a really good use of it.

Senator CAPITO. Well, thank you. Do you feel that NOAA has the support to have a sufficient procurement process now to assess the quality data sets and improve the data storage? We talked about going to the cloud and a lot of other things the other day. Do you like the procurement system is going to allow NOAA to move in this direction as rapidly as it needs to be?

Mr. JACOBS. I mean, so there is an interesting dynamic, I think, unfolding because a lot of the data that NOAA has is really sought after by private industry. And the data that NOAA has is obviously freely available to the public, but private industry may pay a cloud service provider to crunch the numbers.

So when we would process the data on an HPC system, and then host it in a data center like a commercial cloud service provider, they are actually offering to host the data for—and sometimes free. Petabytes of free storage, and allow to pay for the egress, for the download, because they can also charge industry to process it.

Senator CAPITO. Right. So that gives you a little more flexibility with that. I would like to pivot to the storms in Texas and the weather predicting. And obviously, I live in an area that is prone to rapid flooding like that. But the tragedy that we see in Texas is like nothing that I can—it is unimaginable for many of us.

I think a lot of it—and I think it is the aftermath of community engagement, community warning systems. How can that be improved? How can—and I know, that is not necessarily in that specific area simply because it is probably too early to assess that.

But generally speaking, there are still gaps, and I think—I am sure this is something that you think about. You shared with me that you have two—a 9-year-old and an 11-year-old daughter, I believe. So you are feeling this as well. Do you have any comments on that?

Mr. JACOBS. It is—so coming from a background of numerical weather prediction, I always thought naively that if I could improve the forecast skill, I would save more lives. And it turns out that it is really the last mile.

Even if you have a perfect forecast, if you can't get the information to the people, it is totally useless. And so, having a way to distribute the watches and warnings, and particularly in regions that don't have good cell coverage.

I think there is an opportunity to modernize NOAA Weather Radio, and then potentially also look at some satellite capabilities, some CubeSat-based data transmission. That wasn't really an option a couple of years ago.

And so, I think probably an all-of-the-above approach and modernizing the way to distribute these watches and warnings is something that is going to be a top priority of mine.

Senator CAPITO. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Senator BLUNT ROCHESTER. Senator Luján, you are recognized.

**STATEMENT OF HON. BEN RAY LUJÁN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW MEXICO**

Senator LUJÁN. Thank you, Madam Chair. And to my brothers from Texas, my deepest condolences for all that has happened, and for all the lives that have been lost and families that have impacted, and to everyone that has been on the ground with all those first responders, all the volunteers just helping those families.

As my colleagues may know, unfortunately, in New Mexico yesterday, the Rio Ruidoso rose to nearly 20 feet in a matter of minutes amid heavy rainfall, sweeping away homes, if you can believe that, in the flows. And we have already lost loved ones out that way. This is an area that was also ravaged by wildfire not too long ago, as we have all had conversations about what needs to be done with FEMA and others with wildfire and then the flooding that follows for years and years to follow.

Now, today we have witnesses that hope to serve at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA, which oversees the National Weather Service which provides critical forecasting data that Americans rely on to protect their lives. We also know that emergency alerts and the work of NOAA and the National Weather Service does save lives.

I appreciate your response, Dr. Jacobs, to the question from Senator Capito. However, Project 2025 has outlined a plan to commercialize the forecasting, which would force American taxpayers to pay private companies to access weather forecasts.

Dr. Jacobs and Mr. Jordan, yes or no, do you think Americans should have to pay to access forecasting data to protect the safety of their families and homes from natural disasters? Dr. Jacobs.

Mr. JACOBS. No. I think that that is an essential service that all Americans deserve.

Senator LUJÁN. Mr. Jordan.

Mr. JORDAN. I agree, no.

Senator LUJÁN. Dr. Jacobs, in late May I sent a letter to the National Weather Service, along with several of my colleagues, regarding the National Weather Service's decision to discontinue translations of weather alerts and forecast into languages other than English. Those services have now been restored.

This created a dangerous gap in access to emergency information for those nearly 68 million people in the United States that speak a language other than English at home. Yes or no, do you agree

that people deserve to get emergency alerts in the language that they can understand?

Mr. JACOBS. Yes.

Senator LUJÁN. Yes or no, do you commit to ensuring that this lapse in translation doesn't happen again?

Mr. JACOBS. If confirmed, making sure that the watches and warnings go out, and they are understood, it is definitely a priority.

Senator LUJÁN. Appreciate that. On September 1, 2019, when you were NOAA's Acting Administrator, President Trump erroneously tweeted that Alabama had been hit hard by Hurricane Dorian.

Shortly after, the National Weather Service Birmingham Office issued the accurate statement, "Alabama will not see any impacts from Dorian." Three days later, President Trump went on TV and displayed a weather map altered with a black Sharpie line to show that Dorian would hit Alabama.

Two days after that, you helped draft a release, un-signed statement rebuking the Birmingham NWS and repeating President Trump's baseless claim that Hurricane Dorian could impact Alabama. You told the Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General in their investigation that you, "definitely felt like our jobs were on the line."

And while you did not like it, you would make the same decision again to edit a less inflammatory statement as the least bad option. Mr. Jacobs or Dr. Jacobs, do you—do I have it right? Is that correct?

Mr. JACOBS. That is what the IDRI report found, yes.

Senator LUJÁN. That you would do nothing differently?

Mr. JACOBS. I mean, there is probably some things I would do differently. And there are a lot of things that I did after that too, you know, I guess, change any potential future outcome. One of them was revamp—

Senator LUJÁN. Let me ask this question, because I just had constituents die in New Mexico. We had constituents die in Texas. Would you sign off on an inaccurate statement due to political pressure in the same event, yes or no?

Mr. JACOBS. No.

Senator LUJÁN. I appreciate that very much. Mr. Kumar, Congress appropriated over \$68 million to MBDA under the most recent funding bill.

But now Secretary Lutnick and the Trump Administration have dismantled the MBDA, ignoring the law Congress passed in 2021. When Deputy Secretary Dabbar was before this committee in May, he committed to "follow every dollar and report back" to this committee regarding the status of MBDA.

I have a letter here that I plan to send to the Deputy Secretary, holding him to this commitment and asking a series of questions regarding MBDA funds and grants. Mr. Kumar, if confirmed, will you—you will be responsible for overseeing the Department's responses to Congress, yes or no?

Mr. KUMAR. Thank you for the question, Senator. Yes.

Senator LUJÁN. So yes or no, will you commit to me that my colleagues and I will have the report Deputy Secretary Dabbar promised regarding the status of MBDA funds and complete answers to

other questions within two weeks of your confirmation, if not before?

Mr. KUMAR. Thank you for the question. If confirmed, I will go back to Deputy Secretary Dabbar on the letter you mentioned.

Senator LUJÁN. We will get a response within two weeks?

Mr. KUMAR. I will make sure to get with him right away and try to provide as timely a response as possible.

Senator LUJÁN. As timely response. Less than two months?

Mr. KUMAR. Thank you for the—I will do my best to get it in the stated timeline.

Senator LUJÁN. Less than six months?

Mr. KUMAR. Again, I will do my best to get it to you in the stated timeline.

Senator LUJÁN. Thank you, Madam Chair. It is challenging when given an amount of time to respond timely, when all of these witnesses take oaths that they will respond timely to this committee, but when we even extend that time that a simple answer of yes is just—cannot be found. It is frustrating. Thank you for the time, Madam Chair.

**STATEMENT OF HON. CYNTHIA LUMMIS,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING**

Senator LUMMIS. I recognize myself for 5 minutes. And I want to start by sending my condolences to the gentleman from New Mexico, and our Chairman from Texas, both of whom have endured significant flooding and loss of life.

And Senator Luján, our condolences to you and your constituents, and as well as Senator Cruz and his constituents. Such a tragedy in both cases. Dr. Jacobs and Mr. Jordan, welcome. And Mr. Kumar, welcome. Your relevant experience in weather operations and atmospheric science policy is noted.

Thank you for your willingness to serve. Look forward to your service for the American people at the National Weather Service. I come from Wyoming. In Wyoming the weather is the news. I am also a rancher, and so the first thing we look at in the morning is the weather, because it affects every move we make.

And that is true for a lot of people in Wyoming, whether it is a closed road because it is icy, the weather turning for people who are recreating in Wyoming. People who want to know what the snowpack is in Jackson Hole at the Mountain Resort or at Targhee. When blizzards are rolling in and you might get trapped in your home if you don't get your vehicle out right away.

I mean, these are all real life, everyday occurrences for Wyoming people. The weather is the news. So I have been in tornadoes in Wyoming, flooding, hail, wind, lightning. I know people who have been struck by lightning. I remember dealing with—I was laying with my brother in an irrigation ditch while it was raining really hard because while I was on the baler and he was on a windrower, a tornado came and literally took the hay up into the air that we were trying to bale and windrow.

And so, we are laying there, getting hailed on in an irrigation ditch trying to stay out of the tornado. Amazing experiences. I mean, that is life in Wyoming with the weather. So, I want to talk

to you specifically about how important the National Weather Service is to Wyoming.

We have two major National Weather Service facilities. One is in Riverton, which is kind of in central Wyoming, and the other in Cheyenne, which is in Southeast. Now, a decision was made to close overnight service in Cheyenne and route evening coverage through Riverton. So the closure is from 1 a.m. to 7 a.m. I will want to visit with you after you are confirmed about this a little more.

You know, that is about, I don't know, 250 or 300 miles difference between Riverton and Cheyenne. It is as different as night and day in terms of the weather experience. And it would be extremely helpful if we could have a presence in that Cheyenne Weather Service facility.

Wyoming is vast. We have almost 100,000 square miles. Multiple mountain ranges. Tremendous topographical and elevation differences. Weather conditions are very, very local. My sister can get hailed out on her farm and I am just hunky-dory just 30 miles or 40 miles away from her. So the weather is a significant factor in our economy, and in our survival, and in health and wellbeing.

So I do want to work with you on the Cheyenne, Riverton issue, as well as other issues regarding the National Weather Service and its ability to serve the people of this country. So quick question now that I have been on my soapbox.

What role do you see technology playing in addressing current forecasting challenges? And how would you balance the ability of technology to serve versus human forecasters? Dr. Jacobs.

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question. So I have been to that Cheyenne office.

Senator LUMMIS. Oh good.

Mr. JACOBS. And one of the fascinating things they told me that I hadn't thought of as a forecaster is one of their big concerns are high wind events. And they are actually worried about 18 wheelers getting blown off the highway, which to me seems like pretty high wind.

Senator LUMMIS. I have seen it happen. I have seen them blow over on the Interstate 25.

Mr. JACOBS. Yes. To answer your question, I think the use of technology is probably a mix. Technology—well, maybe like a three-pronged mix. So using new technology, whether it is space-based or in situ systems like drones to collect observations to build a data set of better initial conditions that is going to improve the models, then a lot of compute architecture.

CPUs are almost phased out. We are looking at GPUs now. Other types of chips to optimize that using AI. And then on the back end, as we have been discussing today, using different types of technologies and capabilities to more rapidly and effectively distribute the watches and warnings.

Senator LUMMIS. Mr. Jordan, do you have a comment on that?

Mr. JORDAN. Thank you for the question Senator. I would agree with Dr. Jacobs, but also want to mention that in addition to technology and moving next generation technologies into the stack of what NOAA uses for weather forecast is important.

And technologies like AI are going to help the forecasters do their job. But the people in the offices at the local level who under-

stand how wacky the weather can be sometimes is extremely important.

Senator LUMMIS. Yes, wacky is right. I mean, it is both a scientific and real life term that we all understand. So if confirmed, I would ask that you review the National Weather Service arrangements in Wyoming from a weather accuracy and safety standpoint. I want to thank you for meeting with my staff yesterday. I look forward to working with you both. And my time is up. Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Senator Klobuchar.

**STATEMENT OF HON. AMY KLOBUCHAR,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MINNESOTA**

Senator KLOBUCHAR. Well, thank you very much, Madam Chair. And thank you to my colleagues who are here. We all are heartbroken over the loss of life, the kids at the camps, the people in both Senator Cruz's and Senator Luján's state. And I think that we all know this is not an isolated incident. We can pretend it is, but it is not.

Extreme weather events like this one have been getting worse and worse all over our country. And we must ensure that NOAA—this hearing couldn't be more timely—and the Department of Commerce as a whole is ready and able to take this on. As we know, as has been repeated by my colleagues, NOAA has lost at least 1,875 employees, totaling a combined 27,000 years of experience and institutional knowledge, and now has over 3,000 vacant staff positions at the very worst time.

So I know Dr. Jacobs, you responded to Senator Cantwell's—chair—Ranking Member Cantwell's questions about confirming that staffing is a priority at the National Weather Service. In May, NOAA started reassigning employees because of the loss of employees to NWS. And if confirmed, how do you make sure that these employees have the necessary technical expertise?

And how do plan to recruit additional employees when the message from this Administration, honestly, has been, please leave? We will give you buyouts. We want you to leave. How are you going to turn that around?

Mr. JORDAN. Well, I guess maybe it is probably a multi-pronged approach. Obviously, one of them would be the reassignments. Lifting of the hiring freeze is certainly going to help.

As far as recruiting, I am optimistic as a former teacher of a lot of former students in mind who are actually Weather Service employees now, that I can appeal to their sense of mission—that this is important.

Like ensuring that Americans have timely and accurate forecast to protect lives and property is something that appeals to people. This is why they go into studying meteorology.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. So you are going to commit to making sure they get this accurate information?

Mr. JORDAN. Yes.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. OK. And I guess along those lines, Mr. Jordan, I just addressed these stronger storms that we know are a scientific fact—warming climate. And if confirmed, will you advocate against attempts to limit information sharing on the impacts of cli-

mate? Because I don't know how we are going to respond to these storms if we pretend it is not happening.

Mr. JORDAN. Thank you for the question, Senator. So yes, I would let the science drive the decisionmaking.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. OK, very good. And how will you ensure that NOAA is able to maintain and improve its extensive observing networks and infrastructure that you mentioned in your testimony?

Mr. JORDAN. Thank you for the question, Senator. So in the planning of these major acquisitions, these observing networks, these are large scale items that span multi—many fiscal years. It is important to ensure that we don't have gaps in those systems, or satellites and likewise. So working with the Department and in Congress here to ensure there is funding to continue those programs.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. OK, thank you. When I first got to the Senate, I was on the Ocean subcommittee, Dr. Jacobs, and I realized I was the only one without an ocean on the subcommittee.

But then I remembered it also included the Great Lakes, and we have Lake Superior, which is of course superior to any ocean. So we have incredible research going on out of Duluth with our Great Lakes Observing Center. We have incredible research going on through the Minnesota Sea Grant and education.

And so, I just want people to remember that. The inland lakes, we have more than 10,000 despite our license plate—we have 15,000, we have Lake Superior. This research is also important. Could you address that and whether you will support the continuation of these inland sea grants?

Mr. JORDAN. Yes. So actually the lakes are a big driver in weather. Like lake affect snow and things like that. And also I know that the harmful algal blooms are really important for folks in the lake. So, continuing that research, obviously if confirmed, very high priority.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. OK, very good. Thank you. Just last, Mr. Kumar, I like many of my colleagues have addressed letters. Specifically represent Clyburn and Senator Luján and I led a letter about the BEAD Program. It was a more recent one, but there is ones going back. And if you will commit to get these letters answered?

Mr. KUMAR. Thank you for the question, Senator. If confirmed, yes, I will commit to making sure to work with my colleagues to get you accurate and timely responses.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. And last, Secretary Lutnick announced that the Trump Administration is going to relaunch the Tech Hubs Program. He and I discussed this when he was in my office. I also discussed it with the Deputy. And they are going to plan a new round of selection in early 2026. We are one of the tech hubs in Minnesota, but we did not get funded despite being one of the premier—this is back in time—as you know, places for medical device development and the like, and in the Midwest or in the entire country. Will you work with me and my staff to look at the Med Tech 3.0 Program in Minnesota?

Mr. KUMAR. Thank you for the question, Senator. Absolutely, if confirmed. I know our EDA team is very active on working with offices to make sure they have the most up to date information on the new competition and would be happy to work with your office.

Senator KLOBUCHAR. And then just last, not a question, I will put it in writing, Rural Export Center, which is out of Fargo. But I am always friends with our neighbors, and a big priority for me and Senator Hoeven. So, I hope you will look at that as well. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Young.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TODD YOUNG,
U.S. SENATOR FROM INDIANA**

Senator YOUNG. Welcome all. Dr. Jacobs, my colleagues have talked about the benefits emerging technologies can provide. For instance, how quantum computing can better track and predict the movements of severe weather patterns. How AI may predict when another event may occur, and others—other applications.

I am working on reintroduction of several bills with my colleagues, and the impetus is advancing our technological leadership and capabilities in emerging technologies. Outside of what has been discussed here already, what other benefits do these emerging technologies promise to deliver? And how do you plan to work across the Department and other Executive agencies, as applicable, to make sure these deliverables are recognized?

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question, Senator. So one of the things that we haven't talked about today that I think is really fascinating and I would love to be a focus is edge computing.

And I say that because as the satellites on orbit become more sophisticated and the sensors have higher resolution data, the files become larger. And downlinking those files takes time, moving that data takes time.

And weather is a very time sensitive capability to do these forecasts, so we have to get the data as fast as we can. And to the extent that it is possible, to do edge computing on orbit to process that data before it is downlinked I think would be a huge step forward.

Senator YOUNG. What do you anticipate needs to be done in this area? Do we need to assemble kind of a strategy or a broader effort? I will let you explain or unpack for us what needs to be done.

Mr. JACOBS. So, I think some of this can be tested on the ground. I also think that there are a lot of capabilities that have been developed on the classified intel side where the data itself might be classified, but the process of compressing or sending the data might not be. So to repurpose those on the civil side would be an interesting thing I would like to work on.

Senator YOUNG. Would you work with me on that priority, should you be confirmed?

Mr. JACOBS. Absolutely.

Senator YOUNG. OK, great. I am a member of the Intelligence Committee, as well as the Commerce Committee, so there may be some synergies there. Thank you. Continuing with you, doctor, I would like to turn to IUU fishing. Illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, or IUU fishing, isn't just an environmental issue, though it is, of course, that.

It also undermines our economic security and our national security. It affects American fishermen, especially in the Gulf of America, who are often competing with illegally operating Mexican fish-

ing vessels. In addition, we have to contend with a broader pattern of illegal maritime activities by state and non-state actors from the People's Republic of China and Russia.

They continue to engage in unregulated fishing that will impact our allies and the rest of us in a negative way. And so, it is our responsibility to protect American fishermen these violations, to hold other nations accountable to the same standards of maritime law and sustainability that we uphold.

How do you plan, doctor, on coordinating with offices in other departments or agencies like the State Department or Coast Guard to effectively counter this issue at home and abroad?

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question. So, countering this is a huge priority. Obviously, seafood competitiveness and reducing the seafood trade deficit is a big priority, so combating IUU is essential to accomplishing that.

Would love to work, if confirmed, with the Coast Guard, with the Navy, particularly in the Pacific where there are a lot of false flag vessels doing illegal fishing in our EEZ, in other countries' EEZs where they are not flagged to be fishing. Tracking these ships when they turn off their transponders, traveling around.

A lot of times there are other sort of nefarious things like human trafficking that is going along with this IUU, you know, as well as the, like we were mentioning earlier, the poaching of red snapper in the Gulf of America. That is a huge issue.

And working with the State Department on that. And also potentially exploring other technologies, not just for the fishing aspect, but for the imports, because there is a lot of things that are being imported that we really need to take a close look at. Mislabeled, things like that, as far as imported seafood.

Senator YOUNG. Yes. I think you hit on an important but often under discussed component of this, which is the businesses themselves that will supply us seafood, they need to bring more transparency to their supply chains and, you know, ensure that they are not procuring seafood that has been obtained illegally. But I hope to work with you on this as well. Do you commit to doing so, should you be confirmed?

Mr. JACOBS. If confirmed, absolutely.

Senator YOUNG. OK. And then last, how do you see regional fisheries management organizations, or RFMOs, fitting into this equation? Is there an opportunity to reform or push these organizations to more effectively combat IUU fishing throughout the world when origin countries refuse to prosecute illegal fishermen, even with overwhelming evidence of their activities?

Mr. JACOBS. Definitely. RFMOs, working through the RFMOs to ensure that other countries enforce their laws is really important. And also working through RFMOs to ensure that we have a fair quota set for U.S. fishermen, very important.

Senator YOUNG. Dr. Jacobs. Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Hickenlooper.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN HICKENLOOPER,
U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO**

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thanks to each of you for your willingness to go back into the arena, as it were.

Let me ask you each a question, just to start. Obviously, natural disasters cost the U.S. over \$182 billion in damages last year alone. NOAA is a hugely important institution.

I think everyone's questions recognize that and reflect that. So just as a thumbs up or thumbs down, recognizing nothing stays the same, do you think we are spending too much money in the science, the research around NOAA, or are we spending too little? Why don't you go start, Dr. Jacobs, and we will go right down the road.

Mr. JACOBS. I think it probably depends on the area of research and working with the President's—

Senator HICKENLOOPER. As a whole. I don't need a polemic, but as a whole, are we spending too much or too little?

Mr. JACOBS. Oh, I don't know that you could spend too much on the research.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. That is a good answer.

Mr. JORDAN. Thank you for the question, Senator. It is a difficult question to answer, how much across the Federal Government the spending on science activities. But I would say it is a good thing to fund.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Right. I was thinking more just about NOAA. I realize the Federal Government. I wrestle with that as well. And certainly science isn't perfect. Science is full of second guessing, and it is always trying to get better, as you all know. It is not a perfectly precise study, but it is crucial.

Mr. KUMAR. Thank you for the question, Senator. I am the nominee to run Leg Affairs, so I defer to my colleagues here from—that are NOAA nominees, but certainly appreciate the importance of funding research.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Great. You know, we have talked a lot about our ability to forecast natural disasters and how important that is. And I do agree the last mile that both of you, or both of the doctors, brought up is critical. But I also believe in incremental improvement.

And I think especially with better computing, we will be able to get that recognition of when there is a potential flood event—and our heart goes out to the people in Texas and New Mexico. Unbelievable, the tragedy that happened there. But four hours more, even with our not insufficient last mile, you know, how do we get information to those groups in time—that extra four hours could make a huge difference.

So I look at the importance of getting data, and having it there, and working with that data. And yet, it appears that we are having—we are going to stop collecting data or storing data and using data in certain places, most specifically the National Center for Environmental Information that tracks natural disasters.

Is that something that you or Dr. Jacobs are concerned about? Are you willing to commit to restoring and updating NOAA's database? Because to me, that is the foundation that so much of your work is built upon.

Mr. JORDAN. Yes. If confirmed, definitely ensuring that that data is archived and easily accessible by the public, the research, the science community, is an essential function of NOAA.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Right. And at some point we will get to, in terms of predicting disasters, be able to incorporate soil moisture, soil conditions, I mean all these other variables that have such a powerful effect.

And, Mr. Jordan, again, obviously NOAA has invested in satellites, delicate instruments to measure ecosystems of all types, to forecast weather, issue warnings. In terms of the satellites, do you have concerns about the recent efforts to limit the costs around that collection of data and making sure that the recent announcement, the Defense Meteorological Satellite Program, is going to terminate data collection and the sharing of that data later this month. That is you, Dr. Jacobs. Sorry. I was just asking about the Defense Meteorological—

Mr. JORDAN. Yes. So DMSP for decades has been a really important program. It is my understanding that the funding for this was terminated back in 2015, but the atmospheric science community has had the benefit of these sensors that have lasted well beyond their lifespan.

And there are a couple of ways to backfill this. So first of all, the sounding data—there are other instruments that NOAA operates from AMSU-A, ATMS. I think what is probably of more interest in the hurricane forecasting community is the imager data. So the microwave imagers.

So there is a follow-on program to this. It is my understanding—and again, I am not in the agency yet, but I still know a lot of this because I work with the community. The follow-on program, they already have an asset on orbit. It is producing data. I believe NOAA is going to get access to that pretty soon.

I also think that there are potentially other capabilities out there. So there is—like European Space Agency has some of these assets as well, so data sharing. So yes, it is extremely important.

Senator HICKENLOOPER. Appreciate that. And I am out of time, but I do want to—I won't be able to come back for a second round of questions, but I am going to submit in writing some of the questions about the cooperative institutes that you guys all work with that I think are so important.

We have a couple Colorado State University, University of Colorado where you have got the institutions and graduate students and PhDs all working together kind of helping you expand your effort.

And then also the fire weather testbed that NOAA has based in Denver to increase wildfire resilience by researching and doing all that work around wildfires. So God bless you all for all your work. It is so crucial to the safety and—of most of our—well, all of our country. I yield back to the Chair.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Fetterman.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN FETTERMAN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM PENNSYLVANIA**

Senator FETTERMAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hello, Dr. Jacobs. Hi. I mean, I am from Pennsylvania, and I am sure you are familiar with Lake Erie. I love Erie. Erie is a very special part of my state.

And for me, Lake Erie is such an incredibly important economic engine and major, major cultural amenity for Pennsylvania. Tourism in Erie brings in over \$1.2 billion and supports more than 15,000 jobs. And now for me, the tourism, it is driven because of the beauty. If anyone in here, in the room has ever been to Presque Island, and it is one of the most remarkable parks in the country. And I am not saying that as just a booster. I am saying that it actually is true.

And my family swims in Lake Erie, so we have a lot of skin in that game too. So protecting and making Erie more and more clean and pure. So for me, NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuary is working to designate Lake Erie as a National Marine Sanctuary. And of course I fully support that and know people that live in Erie support that. And today I was just asking to see if you support that, or would like to commit or work with my office to see this happen quickly?

Mr. JACOBS. If confirmed, I would love to work with you and your office on that.

Senator FETTERMAN. All right. That is wonderful. And then now, some people, maybe my colleagues, may not be aware of lake effect snow. So I am an amateur. So I would describe it as when colder air sweeps over warmer water of Lake Erie, and that can drop three feet of snow really in a short amount of time. Is that inaccurate?

Mr. JACOBS. Your science is correct. There is—it is heat flux driven.

Senator FETTERMAN. Yes, yes. So for me, and if you live in Erie, you know, 18 inches doesn't even make the news really—you know, rarely. And that is—you know, I mean, I live in Pittsburgh. We don't even—it is so different. It is very, very specific to that region because of lake effect snow.

And if you are from Arizona, you are like, I have no idea what that means. But, you know, I remember there was one Christmas time that I think 50, 55 inches dumped on Erie quickly in about 24 to 36 hours. So of course, NOAA is very important. So for me—and it has been brought to my attention that the National Weather Service that oversees Erie doesn't have a meteorologist, so—and I believe that.

So for me, even if it is like a part-time thing, I think it is reasonable when you can have three feet of snow from those things. So I just think perhaps, I support having a meteorologist, even part-time from a savings perspective, for there. So just if you have any thoughts?

Mr. JACOBS. I don't know the exact staffing levels at your office, but I will definitely get back to you on the numbers. And if confirmed, I would definitely commit to making sure it is staffed up.

Senator FETTERMAN. Great. That is great. And actually, I yield.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Markey.

**STATEMENT OF HON. EDWARD MARKEY,
U.S. SENATOR FROM MASSACHUSETTS**

Senator MARKEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. For decades, NOAA has collected and made public information on how many extreme weather related disasters caused by more than \$1 billion worth of

damage. In the 1980s, the U.S. experienced a weather or climate disaster that caused more than \$1 billion in damage every four months, on average.

Now, in our climate change era, our communities are hit by a disaster of that magnitude on average by every three weeks. So Dr. Jacobs, I appreciated our conversation on this yesterday. Do you stand by your statement that you made to me yesterday that NOAA's data on billion dollar disasters should be made available to the public?

Mr. JACOBS. So the data that NOAA collects to produce that, yes. I think that that is a really important thing.

Senator MARKEY. Well, thank you. And that is great to hear. Back in May, the Trump Administration announced that it was going to start burying that information and stop informing the public about the cost of weather disasters. And I appreciate your commitment. And the Administration is fighting disasters the only way they know how, by denying they even exist.

And the only problem solved by burying weather data is that Trump Administration's PR problem. But that is all that is buried. The actual information should be out there so the public can see how much worse these storms are as each decade is unfolding.

So Dr. Jacobs, do you think that climate focused research data and grant programs are relevant to NOAA's mission to understand the health of coastal and marine resources, and predict marine environments?

Mr. JACOBS. Well, weather, water, and climate is essential to NOAA's mission. It is a fundamental part of it, and so data along the coastline obviously is critical to that.

Senator MARKEY. So I am glad that we agree on that. So do you support the efforts to collect and understand regional climate data, which is so important for developing the forecast that our farmers and other small business owners use to make decisions every single day?

Mr. JACOBS. Well, essentially, all data is regional at some level.

Senator MARKEY. Right. I know that. But do you agree that there should be a continuation of the collection?

Mr. JACOBS. Yes. Collecting of data observations is a core essential to NOAA's mission.

Senator MARKEY. Yes. So, and that is absolutely critical as well because it is too bad that President Trump's budget uses the exact language on climate research as a justification to kill that exact program at NOAA. And frankly, I am shocked that an agenda that would, you know, cause such problems could even be talked about in the era that we are in right now.

Dr. Jacobs, the Trump Administration wants to cut NOAA's budget by 27 percent, no climate, weather, sea grant, ocean labs, or many other programs exempted. Dr. Jacobs, yes or no, do you support these cuts?

Mr. JACOBS. Yes, I support the President's budget.

Senator MARKEY. Dr. Jacobs, do these cuts improve the weather readiness of our country?

Mr. JACOBS. The cuts I believe you are referring to, a lot of that work is being transitioned in from the research side to the oper-

ations side. So the National Weather Service, the National Ocean Service, their mission, essential functions will continue.

Senator MARKEY. I have a disagreement with you. A 27 percent cut is going to have an impact, because there is a definite ripple effect that occurs when that kind of funding is slashed.

Because weather readiness without funding is a hallucination. You know, you can't cut something by 27 percent even as the storms are enhanced as each year goes by without having that additional capacity. So, I do not agree with you on that issue.

And finally, Mr. Jordan, in 2012, Senator Inhofe wrote a book called, "The Greatest Hoax, How the Global Warming Conspiracy Threatens Your Future". The next year, you adopted the social media handle @thegreatesthoax as a reference to that book. Is that correct?

Mr. JORDAN. Thank you for the question, Senator. That particular name came about while I was earning my master's—

Senator MARKEY. No, I appreciate that. Can you explain why you chose and kept the greatest hoax as your online identity based upon Senator Inhofe's book? What was the joke in that?

Mr. JORDAN. So there is no joke. It was a young man's attempt at wit, and there is really no deeper meaning. They came about contemporaneously and that is about it.

Senator MARKEY. No, I appreciate that. But if you want to be a comedian, you should maybe go to open mic night at the local club because this is serious business. You know, The Greatest Hoax is not in any way a joke. It is an attempt to undermine legitimate climate science, undermine those who lead on weather, those who lead on protecting our oceans.

So it just says to me that all the rest of us have to get more serious if the greatest hoax is your handle, because that is not where our country should be. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Senator Baldwin.

**STATEMENT OF HON. TAMMY BALDWIN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM WISCONSIN**

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, if I may, I wanted to start by taking a moment of personal privilege to say, I heard your remarks about your visit to Camp Mystic, and they were heartfelt.

Closing with the Hunt Store, which is now Hunt Strong. I just want to let you know that our prayers, my prayers, go out to all the folks impacted by the tragedy in Kerr County and throughout Central Texas.

Senator MARKEY. And may I say, I should have led with that as well. I heard your comments. That was brilliant and heartfelt. Thank you.

Senator BALDWIN. Dr. Jacobs, Wisconsin feels the impact of increasingly severe weather events like flooding, tornadoes, and drought. And NOAA weather and satellite services are more important now than ever. In particular, farmers in Wisconsin depend upon the agency's data to decide when to plant.

And our shipping and fishing industries rely on it to plan safe routes and travel schedules. NOAA data is vital for the safety and economic security across the Midwest and the Great Lakes region.

So if confirmed, will you commit to reversing the gutting of NOAA's weather resources by restoring satellite surfaces and staffing in particular?

Mr. JACOBS. If confirmed, definitely making sure staffing is a top priority. And also satellite data, both the procurement of it, access to it, utilization of it is also a central top priority.

Senator BALDWIN. Thank you. And thank you for our meeting prior to this hearing today. I wanted to put on the record something we talked about. So if confirmed, will you ensure that high quality weather and climate data remains both freely and publicly accessible to everyone that relies on it?

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question. Yes, if confirmed, it is my belief that this data should be readily accessible by the public.

Senator BALDWIN. I want to take a moment to recognize the incredible network of Wisconsin organizations that partner with NOAA to protect the Great Lakes, including the Wisconsin Sea Grant, the National Estuarine Research Reserve System, the Coastal Management Program, the Marine Sanctuary Program, and many more. These programs operate on incredibly small, tight budgets, while delivering enormous environmental and economic returns.

And I would like to thank the people who lead this work in my home State of Wisconsin. Dr. Jacobs, the Great Lakes are a vital resource, not just for industry but for the 40 million people who rely on them for their drinking water. NOAA plays a major role in protecting the lakes alongside its Federal, State, tribal, and local partners from invasive species, from flooding and harmful algal blooms.

If confirmed, will you work to—on restoring and fully funding coastal programs that most impact our Great Lakes, including the Sea Grant, the Coastal Zone Management Program, the Estuarine Research Program, and marine sanctuaries that are doing this work right on the ground every day?

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question. If confirmed, would love to work with you on this going forward. I actually went home last night and read up on lamprais after our conversation.

Senator BALDWIN. And what did you learn?

Mr. JACOBS. Stuff I didn't really want to think about.

[Laughter.]

Senator BALDWIN. Same here.

Mr. JACOBS. These are obviously very, very important to you and your state, as well as to NOAA, and I would look forward to working with you on this.

Senator BALDWIN. Very good. Mr. Kumar, I am concerned that the President's Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Proposal eliminates funding for the EDA, which among many other critical functions runs the Tech Hub Program that was enacted through the Bipartisan CHIPS and Science Act.

As we discussed, Wisconsin has a tech hub focused on personalized medicine and bio health technology, key areas for improving patient care and competing with China. The future of the Tech Hub Program is too important to leave in question.

So will you commit to keeping Congress updated on Commerce's plans for the Tech Hub Program, and will you be responsive when we have questions?

Mr. KUMAR. Thank you for the question, Senator. And I enjoyed our discussion yesterday on this topic. I know the Secretary sees this as a very important program. And yes, if confirmed, I am committed to working with you and ensuring the EDA team works with you to ensure you and your office have all the necessary information on tech hubs.

Senator BALDWIN. And just to reiterate, the EDA program is proposed to be closed, so it will be hard to have them be the ones to be of contact. I need to know from you that you will keep Congress informed where it is rehoused, if that is a successful proposal on the part of the President.

Mr. KUMAR. Absolutely. If confirmed, I will work with you and your office on it.

Senator BALDWIN. OK. And I would like to close by reiterating my frustration with the lack of communication from the Commerce Department regarding dismantling of the Minority Business Development Agency. It is really unacceptable that the Secretary has been unresponsive to Congress as he takes away the resources for small businesses that we built up on a bipartisan basis. So, if you are confirmed, I sincerely hope this will change.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Dr. Jacobs, President Trump has made it a national priority to expand offshore oil and gas production. NOAA plays a key role in reviewing permits and issuing authorizations under the Marine Mammal Protection Act and other laws.

If you are confirmed, how will you improve the efficiency of the offshore permitting process, particularly when it comes to environmental reviews under NEPA or the MMPA?

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question, Senator. If confirmed, I will work with the White House to find efficiencies to unlock America's energy potential, consistent with the Executive Order of unleashing American energy.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Jordan, a persistent challenge within NOAA has been the siloed structure of its line offices, which has resulted in research projects stalling or never transitioning into operational use.

NOAA must close the gap between research and operations in order to give the public and decisionmakers more timely and actionable information. How would you accelerate the research to operations timeline at NOAA and foster greater collaboration across line offices?

Mr. JORDAN. Thank you for the question, Senator. So moving the research closer to the operational sister line offices of NOAA would be important to take that research from OAR, where it currently exists now, and moving it to the Weather Service or the National Ocean Service.

The closeness with the operational end user, the outcome of that data, will foster greater collaboration and innovation. And you also get that feedback loop of research to operations, operations to research. The operations really should be driving what the research is focusing on.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Jacobs, we have seen a pattern of dual-engine flameouts caused by water and hail ingestion when aircraft descend into severe storms. Unlike commercial jets, NOAA's hurricane hunters use turboprops, which are less vulnerable because they do not pull water directly into the engines.

Can you and the Department of Commerce commit to working with the FAA to ensure that a future improved hurricane hunter fleet uses appropriate technology to prevent deadly incidents?

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question, Senator. I spent many years in the aviation industry. The turboprops operate differently. They essentially aren't affected by the air fuel ratio, and that is what helps them in saturated environments. And would definitely commit to working with the FAA on this issue.

The CHAIRMAN. Great. Hurricanes have also been known to pick up entire homes off their foundations. How big would a drone need to be to navigate through a hurricane, and to your knowledge is such a drone available?

Mr. JACOBS. Well, I think—well, thank you for the question. There is probably two capabilities. One would be flying against the wind and one flying with the wind. So for the last couple of years, one of the things that NOAA has been doing is deploying small drones inside of the hurricane to fly around, but they are a foot or two long.

There is other potential opportunities to fly above the hurricane and deploy things through the hurricane. I think it is to be determined if we can actually fly one through the hurricane, but I have been in conversations with a couple of companies that are interested in potentially testing some capabilities.

The CHAIRMAN. And in your judgment, what are the benefits of artificial intelligence for improving weather forecasting?

Mr. JACOBS. The primary benefit, in my opinion, is computational efficiency. Even if the artificial intelligence can't do something better, if it can do it faster and more efficiently, I think it is worth using.

The CHAIRMAN. OK. Senator Sullivan.

**STATEMENT OF HON. DAN SULLIVAN,
U.S. SENATOR FROM ALASKA**

Senator SULLIVAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Jacobs, looking forward to meeting with you. And I want to—I missed a lot of the hearing because we are marking up the defense bill.

But I want to look forward to working with you, particularly on NOAA's jobs. In my state, in Alaska, NOAA does really, really important work. And I have appreciated the Trump Administration's Executive Order on restoring American seafood competitiveness. You know, and I talked to Secretary Lutnick about this, our fishermen often get the raw end of the deal, right. If you are like a farmer, high tech, Silicon Valley guy, or a Wall Street guy, the American government takes care of you, right.

If you are—and you know, those are all important, particularly our farmers. Nothing against them. But when you are a fisherman, a lot of times it is like, hey, good luck, right. And so, our fishermen don't ask a lot. They ask a few basic things from the Federal Gov-

ernment, robust fish surveys to inform accurate stock assessments and the timely promulgation of regulations to open up the fisheries.

Unfortunately, NOAA, and this was during Biden for sure, they didn't do stock assessments. They were going on doing all their kind of other stuff. They got a lot of money, but they weren't doing the basic blocking and tackling of stock assessments. How much fish is in certain parts of the ocean, and how much can we fish it, knowing that we want sustainable, environmentally sound fisheries, OK.

I have been worried—and when the Deputy Secretary of Commerce was here during his confirmation hearing, you know, I let him know about my concerns that the Trump NOAA guys aren't doing it either. And it is just—it is not good, right. You got a basic job to do. So I need your commitment right now, if you get confirmed, and you and I are going to have a long talk about this when you come see me in my office, but you got to do this, right. And you can't cut staff who do this work.

If you don't do surveys, guess what happens? The great American fishermen that I represent—and by the way, my state is the superpower of seafood. Over two-thirds of all seafood harvested in America, commercial, subsistence, over two-thirds comes from Alaska. So, if and when you get confirmed, you are going to be spending a lot of time in Alaska. But—right?

Mr. JACOBS. Absolutely.

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes, good. OK. But my point is, if you don't do the surveys, then the science is kind of crimped, and people say, well, we are not sure what you can do, and it limits their ability to actually go fish. So I want your view on that.

I am sure Senator Cantwell has already hit you up on it. But this is so important, and I am a little concerned that the Department of Commerce under Secretary Lutnick is not doing it either. And it is unacceptable.

You guys got to commit to me—and don't do like Biden did. They got all this money and then they never did surveys either. They did all their other stuff. I don't know what the hell they did with the money. But commit to me on this right now, because it is really important. This is going to be a main part of your job. And, you know, first six months, I have been really concerned.

And gosh darn it, this—we are not asking a lot. Do the science. Do the surveys. You know, during COVID, people were making up, oh, we can't go out. It is too dangerous. No, go do the surveys. Can you talk a little about that and make a commitment to me and my fishermen that you will get out and do the damn surveys, right?

It is really—again, we don't ask for much. Basic blocking and tackling that NOAA is supposed to do. And I don't know why it is a problem right now. It shouldn't be a problem in the Trump Administration. I need you to focus on it and commit to me right now to do it.

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question. So if confirmed, absolutely. Stock assessments and surveys is a top priority. We wouldn't be competitive in the seafood industry if we don't do those, because understanding, you know, for example, the status of pollock stock is essential for setting the quotas. And I understand

and appreciate your concerns, and if confirmed very, very high priority.

Senator SULLIVAN. Good. And I appreciate that. We have a lot of issues. The bycatch issue is an issue. I was just up on the Yukon River. There is no fishing again on the Yukon. I was up—my wife's family has a fish camp on the Yukon river.

There is no king fishing again. We need to get to the bottom of what is happening to our salmon runs. I had legislation, my Alaska Salmon Research Task Force Act, which was passed. NOAA did some good work. But we have some runs in Alaska that are doing great, Bristol Bay, sockeye run.

Other iconic runs in Alaska, king runs on the Yukon to Kuskokwim, they are cratering and that really hurts people. More than just food security, it is culture for our native communities.

Can you commit to me to continue to work getting the best science, the best minds on why we are seeing in certain parts of Alaska these dramatic crashes in our salmon runs and why that is happening, and take action to help us return to what everybody in Alaska and America wants, strong, vibrant salmon runs?

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question. Absolutely. If confirmed, we will commit to working on this. This is something that I have been wondering about for a while because we do fund a lot of this restoration, and a lot of these stocks don't seem to be improving, and it is deeply concerning.

Senator SULLIVAN. Yes. Well, and there is a gap in the research, right. That is one of the things that—it is a long story, but the salmon live out in the ocean most of their life, but the research from the Feds is actually not focused on salmon.

Alaska, the state, focuses on salmon research, but within the rivers, not out on the big ocean. We need more research on what is happening to the salmon as they live out in the oceans for most of lives, and that is where NOAA could be very helpful. Can I get your commitment on that as well?

Mr. JACOBS. Yes. Definitely commit to working with you on this.

Senator SULLIVAN. And then finally—and I do want to compliment Secretary Lutnick and his team, President Trump and his team on their Executive Order on seafood competitiveness. That was really welcomed. It was a really good EO.

We got to work together to implement it. But the other thing I just need your commitment on, and Secretary Lutnick has been great on this, the unfair, unbalanced trade relationship that we have had, particularly with Russia and China. What do I mean? Russia banned the importation of American seafood in 2014. Zero fish from America could go to Russia.

And we, for whatever reason, for the last decade, have let them import as much fish as they want. That is crushing our fishermen, fishing communities. Finally, two years ago, under the Biden Administration, I give them credit, they blocked the importation of Russian seafood.

Then the Russians sent it to China to have it laundered in China, and we closed that loophole, right. And the Trump Administration, to their credit, has been really good about keeping that ban on the importation of Russian seafood, regardless of where they send it for secondary head gutting and fileting.

But I need your commitment to continue to that and work with us. We just had a really good hearing on IUU fishing, where the Chinese, the Russians, they have no standards, they use slave labor, and we need your help to work on those issues as well. Can I get your commitment on those?

Mr. JACOBS. Absolutely.

Senator SULLIVAN. Good. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. You know, Dr. Jacobs, you have spent decades as a redfish fishing guide on the Atlantic. I do have to ask, in following up my friend, Senator Sullivan's questions, have you been salmon fishing in Alaska?

Mr. JACOBS. I have.

The CHAIRMAN. Good. That was the right answer, and it is extraordinary. I have to—

Senator SULLIVAN. That was a right answer.

The CHAIRMAN. And it is a unique and beautiful place.

Senator SULLIVAN. Well, maybe when you come up to Alaska, the Chairman and I, we can host you for some more fishing out there.

Mr. JACOBS. I am looking forward to it.

The CHAIRMAN. And since he is a guide, we may do better with him along.

Senator SULLIVAN. That is right.

[Laughter.]

The CHAIRMAN. Ranking Member Cantwell.

Senator CANTWELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I do want to echo my colleague from Alaska—I did, you are right, bring it up in my earlier questioning about stock assessments, but I want to echo again. You know, our industries are just chasing a never-ending, you know, go-around, right.

But it all starts with stock assessments as a really basic information, and then making sure that we play a more aggressive role internationally to stop the Russians and Chinese for collaborating and impacting our fisheries.

So, very much appreciate your, you know, comments on that. So I would like to follow on with, do you think we should have a NOAA Organic Act? Will that help in persevering and preserving stock assessments in a more robust way?

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you for the question. I believe NOAA is long overdue to have its mission authorized and in statute. So, very much support.

Senator CANTWELL. Great, thank you. Do you support the reauth—do you support the Weather Act reauthorization?

Mr. JACOBS. Yes.

Senator CANTWELL. OK. Do you support replacing a Northwest—the lab, the Northwest Fisheries Science Center? When Senator Sullivan was talking about all of these issues, I remember the whole Canadian, you know, threat to salmon and all the work that we do at that NOAA facility in Seattle. Do we need to replace that or make sure it still exists?

Mr. JACOBS. If I remember correctly, this was an issue when I was at NOAA last time, and it was something we were working on. And I believe there was discussion of potentially working with the university or something.

Senator CANTWELL. Yes. I think it just needs to take the final step, so I just want to make sure—

Mr. JACOBS. Yes, I would love to work with you on that, if confirmed.

Senator CANTWELL. Do you support a tribal government consultation?

Mr. JACOBS. I do.

Senator CANTWELL. Great. I do think that is something that, you know, is not an ongoing effort—we get it. We understand it. With 29 tribes in the Northwest, we get what tribal to government consultation, government to government consultation means. But I do think from time to time, agencies forget this. And certainly I think even in the last Administration, they forgot this.

So hopefully you can help restore that. I understand my colleague asked about the budget cuts, which you said you supported, the 27 percent budget cut to NOAA. Is that correct?

So how do you keep your science mission, and particularly in atmospheric and oceanic areas, how do you keep that science mission if we are cutting that budget, when in reality, like that is a core part of your mission?

Mr. JACOBS. So I appreciate the question. It is—you know, a lot of these priorities, particularly, you know, weather forecasting and things we have been discussing all day. Some of that is being transferred to the Weather Service.

It is my hope for certain things that we are looking at to basically fulfill the mission requirements of the forecasting capabilities, that the Weather Service takes over a lot of that. Some other aspects transferred to the Ocean Service.

Senator CANTWELL. OK. So you think that the missions are going to be preserved, just preserved somewhere else?

Mr. JACOBS. It is—I mean, yes. It is my objective to make sure that NOAA fulfills their mission requirements.

Senator CANTWELL. Great. I am glad you said that. And we had a discussion earlier where you were saying, no, no, these people need to be on the ground. You can't replace people on the grounds.

So you have to have—you have the people that are implementing, understanding the local regional dynamic on weather, and also implementing an action plan, basically getting first responders, everybody to help and implement that based off that data. So very much appreciate that answer.

But in this, you know, it just reminds me, you know, Boeing says, well, we are going to get rid of all these safety inspectors. We are going to get rid of like 300 safety inspectors. Why? Because that was their main job, and we can just self-certify our work. Well, that didn't turn out very well because they missed a lot.

Because it turned out that those safety people actually were doing something really critically important. In fact, they tried to automate parts of it and that turned out to be a disaster, and so they changed it.

So I just, I am cautioning you—and I don't agree with the Trump Administration proposal on cutting these programs. I think there are essential scientific search information. I am all for elevating the game. I have been for years. Elevating with more supercomputing and certainly using—I think one of the things that we can

do is get better information so that forecast is two weeks in advanced. Or why are we cutting these weather balloons?

I mean the fact that the weather balloon is there to tell you the amount of moisture and the condition of the atmosphere. Why was that so important for us with fires? Because the land was getting so dry. A lightning strike that may not have caused a problem, now all of a sudden causes a problem.

So, the critical nature changed, and we had to understand that. So I just, I hope that we are not thinking that we are just going to like put weather up here in some big—you know, oh, we have this really great way of getting information like from the private sector somehow, or not going to play this critical role. I don't know.

Mr. Jordan, you are shaking your head or nodding, so I don't know if you have a thought on this. But we can't just shift these resources somewhere else. We have to own them. NOAA has to own them. They have to own weather forecasting. We need it to be better, but we transfer some of it out and then say that is somebody else. Mr. Jordan.

Mr. JORDAN. Thank you for the opportunity to provide a comment. So I agree—I was shaking my head in agreement with you. Yes, the weather forecasting is very important. America has a robust American private weather industry that really amplifies the work that NOAA does, but it is very important for NOAA to do its weather forecasting mission.

Senator CANTWELL. OK. Well how do we preserve that in a budget?

Mr. JORDAN. I believe looking at the budget, again, not at NOAA, looking at it from the outside, I see the Weather Service mission, the line office, is preserved.

Senator CANTWELL. But what about all the work they do to understand?

Mr. JORDAN. Within the Weather Service?

Senator CANTWELL. Yes.

Mr. JORDAN. The budget, I believe, funds the Weather Service.

Senator CANTWELL. OK. So I am talking about the R&D Office of the Oceanic—that research group.

Mr. JORDAN. Understood. Sorry for the confusion. And as Dr. Jacobs said, looking at the budget again, not having the conversations with the folks inside about what is happening, but it looks like the transition of some of that work is happening from OAR to the Weather Service.

Senator CANTWELL. Yes. I think this is where we are probably in—because that office, the Weather Research Office, is eliminated. So I think what I should do, we should do is—I have heard what Dr. Jacobs has said. Look, I want to get a clear understanding of this. I think we are in a disagreement on this. I think that we like this office. I don't think we want it to be zeroed out.

We think it is the key to NOAA doing its job overall. And, you know, as people talk about killing hurricane hunters. Is that correct? Killing hurricane hunters. These are the people that fly into the hurricanes and give us all the information. Why would we kill that? Why would kill that?

So let's get a framework here and we will follow up with some questions to both of you on this entire regime and how you think

it is going to work but—and I get it, you are nominees by this Administration, so you are going to generally agree with their budget. We disagree with it.

But I think more importantly, let's look at these programs that are going to be cut and have an understanding from you at least about what you think and how that responsibility is going to get served.

Because without it being served, I have serious concerns about our ability to do the job that NOAA is requested to do on forecasting. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Senator Cantwell. Dr. Jacobs, Mr. Jordan, Mr. Kumar, my final question is required of all nominees.

If confirmed, do you pledge to work collaboratively with this committee to provide thorough and timely responses to the Committee's requests and to appear before the Committee when requested?

Mr. JACOBS. Yes.

Mr. JORDAN. Yes.

Mr. KUMAR. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I have letters of support for Dr. Jacobs and Mr. Jordan's nominations. I ask unanimous consent to be inserted in the hearing record. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information referred to follows:]

CSP Center for Sportfishing Policy

OFFICERS
 Thom Daemrich
 Chairman
 Tommy Hancock
 Vice Chairman
 Dave Pfeiffer
 Vice Chairman
 Jeff Angers
 President
 Glenn Hughes
 Secretary
 Jason Schratwieser
 Treasurer

BOARD MEMBERS
 Matthew Bridgewater
 CEO
 GENALIX
 President
 Chris Butler
 President
 Butler Marine
 President
 Thom Daemrich
 President
 Dave Dunn
 Senior Director Sales
 Garmin International
 Eric Felchko
 President
 Domestic Marine America
 Lee Gordon
 Vice President
 Brunswick
 Paul Haines
 President
 Tommy Hancock
 President
 Sportsman Boat
 Guy Harvey
 President
 Guy Harvey Foundation
 Justin Healey
 Vice President
 Viking Yachts
 Frank Huggelweyer
 President
 National Marine
 Manufacturers Association
 Glenn Hughes
 President
 American Sportfishing Association
 Trevor Humphrey
 President
 Victory Corporation
 Jony Jones
 Vice President
 OnWater Marine
 Heather Loughheed
 President
 BoatU.S. Foundation
 John Maxwell
 President
 Regulator Boat
 Jim McDuffie
 President
 Bonefish Tackle Trust
 John Paul Morris
 Boat Pro Shop
 Pat Murray
 President
 Coastal Conservation Association
 Joe Neber
 President
 Contender Boat
 Dave Pfeiffer
 President
 Shimano North America
 Justin Ploe
 Sr. Director Sales
 Purs Fishing, Inc.
 Mark Ray
 President
 Evan Russell
 Coast Guard
 Matt Saloom
 President
 Mervin Boat Group
 Jason Schratwieser
 President
 International Game Fish
 Association
 Bill Shedd
 Chairman
 AFTCO
 Ben Spiciale
 President
 Yamaha Marine
 John Ward
 CEO
 Everglades Boat
 PAST CHAIRS
 Bob Hayes
 Jack Lawton, Jr.

February 4, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz
 Chairman
 U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science & Transportation
 554 Dirksen Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz:

I write to express our strong support for the nomination of Dr. Neil Jacobs to serve as Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Dr. Jacobs is the leader NOAA needs today.

NOAA is America's science agency, but it steered badly off course in the last administration. Dr. Jacobs' background in meteorology, computer modeling and AI-driven predictive analytics makes him the right choice to lead NOAA. Dr. Jacobs' personal experience as a saltwater recreational angler and charter boat captain add important perspective. And Dr. Jacobs' leadership role at NOAA in the first administration of President Trump gives him the necessary experience to drive much-needed reform.

The Center for Sportfishing Policy brings under a single umbrella the leading advocates for marine recreational fishing and boating to promote good stewardship of our nation's marine resources. We recognize NOAA's essential role in providing accurate weather forecasting, maintaining critical scientific research, and overseeing federal fisheries management. Dr. Jacobs' leadership during his previous tenure at NOAA, along with his current work at the Earth Prediction Innovation Center (EPIC) shows his commitment to using advanced technology to enhance NOAA's ability to provide real-time data.

His expertise in modern forecasting technology will help NOAA improve its weather predictions, storm tracking and fisheries management, benefiting the recreational boating and fishing nationwide. His approach to innovation and data-driven decision-making will strengthen NOAA's ability to support marine conservation while ensuring sustainable access to America's fisheries for anglers.

We urge the Committee to move expeditiously with Dr. Jacobs' nomination to return strong and effective leadership at NOAA. His proven track record of scientific expertise and leadership will serve the nation well. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


 Jeff Angers
 President



317.875.5250 | [r] 317.879.8408
 3601 Vincennes Road, Indianapolis, Indiana 46268
 202.628.1558 | [r] 202.628.1601
 20 F Street N.W., Suite 510 | Washington, D.C. 20001

April 22, 2025

The Honorable Ted Cruz
 Chairman
 Senate Committee on Commerce,
 Science & Transportation
 Dirksen Senate Office Building 554
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
 Ranking Member
 Senate Committee on Commerce,
 Science & Transportation
 Russell Senate Office Building 254
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

On behalf of the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC)¹, we write to encourage swift consideration and advancement of the nominees to lead and oversee the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration within the U.S. Department of Commerce. Both Neil Jacobs, nominated to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, and Taylor Jordan, nominated to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, have extensive relevant experience and a keen understanding of key NOAA functions integral to the property and casualty insurance industry and the mission to protect and serve its millions of policyholders nationwide.

NOAA's cutting-edge research and weather forecasting produce information to provide citizens, planners, emergency managers, and other decision makers with reliable information when they need it to help safeguard American lives and property. The insurance industry is one of many reliant on publicly available NOAA datasets, specifically for purposes of assessing and protecting against weather risk – both in the long and short term. These weather data sources and types include but are not limited to National Hurricane Center (NHC) storm forecasting of hurricane size, track, and intensity; National Weather Service (NWS) tornado, wind, and hail reports; the United States Drought Monitor (USDM) for wildfire and flood risk; industry proving grounds; and point observations.

This information helps the insurance industry with risk management, live event and claims response, and catastrophe model development and improvement. It also contributes to greater understanding among American

¹ The National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies consists of over 1,300 member companies, including six of the top 10 property/casualty insurers in the United States. The association supports local and regional mutual insurance companies on main streets across America as well as many of the country's largest national insurers. NAMIC member companies write \$383 billion in annual premiums and represent 61 percent of homeowners, 48 percent of automobile, and 25 percent of the business insurance markets.



homeowners of how extreme weather risk affects the safety and wellbeing of their communities and property, empowering them to mitigate against such risks and hazards.

As American consumers and insurance marketplaces grapple with increased weather risk amid more severe and changing weather patterns, it is imperative these datasets continue to be collected and remain available. Jacobs and Taylor throughout their careers have exhibited their commitment to NOAA weather monitoring and forecasting, and we are confident they will promote and ensure NOAA adheres to maintaining such important weather data functions upon their confirmation.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our endorsement, and we look forward to remaining engaged with your committee as a trusted resource on this and other matters of interest to the insurance industry.

Sincerely,

Jimi Grande
Senior Vice President - Federal and Political Affairs

BRIAN BABIN, D.D.S., Texas
CHAIRMAN

ZOE LORIGREN, California
RANKING MEMBER

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE, AND TECHNOLOGY
2221 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6301
(202) 225-6371
<http://science.house.gov>

July 8, 2025

Senator Ted Cruz
Chairman, Committee on
Commerce, Science, & Transportation
U.S. Senate
245 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cruz:

I am writing to offer my strong support for the nomination of Taylor Jordan to become the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction. I worked closely with Taylor Jordan during his tenure on the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Science, Space, and Technology as a professional staff member. As the Chairman of the Space Subcommittee, I worked with Taylor to ensure critical space equities at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) were held to high standards of mission success for the American people. During our time working together, Taylor was extremely knowledgeable on NOAA's operational weather mission and the protection of lives and property.

Taylor's work on the Committee culminated in the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act, which was signed into law in April of 2017. This important legislation gave NOAA the tools to improve its weather forecasts, transition research into operations, and provided for new public-private partnerships. Taylor's experience working in Congress, his subsequent time working at NOAA, and his success in the private sector give him a unique perspective to help NOAA during this Administration. I have no doubt that if Taylor is confirmed, he will bring his experience, expertise, and innovative thinking to NOAA to improve its environmental observation and prediction missions. Taylor has my full support for this nomination, and I look forward to working with both you, your Committee, and Taylor over the next several years.

Sincerely,



Rep. Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Chairman



The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
U.S. Senate
254 Russell Senate Building
Washington DC, 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce,
Science, and Transportation
U.S. Senate
254 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

July 8, 2025

Dear Chairman Cruz and Ranking Member Cantwell:

On behalf of the Reinsurance Association of America (RAA), I write to strongly endorse the nomination of Dr. Neil Jacobs to be Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere (NOAA Administrator). NOAA serves a critical role in strengthening preparedness, response, and recovery to protect lives, property, and our economy.

Dr. Jacobs is highly regarded as a scientist, public servant, and leader. His scientific credentials provide impressive standing within the scientific and business communities. The RAA believes that insights and monitoring of weather events by the federal government requires someone of Dr. Jacobs's credentials and experience, a responsibility of critical importance at this time.

His service as Acting Administrator of NOAA, during President Trump's first term, reflects well on his commitment to public service and the value of this prior experience in reprising the role. Dr. Jacobs's extensive knowledge of the natural sciences and active engagement with the scientific community are also invaluable as the federal role in science is being evaluated. His engagement with the private sector, including the insurance and reinsurance industries, will be of critical importance, and he brings strong capabilities to support and strengthen that engagement.

We respectfully urge the Committee to advance Dr. Jacobs's nomination and the Senate to confirm him without delay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Nutter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Frank Nutter
President

The RAA is the leading trade association of property and casualty reinsurers doing business in the United States. RAA membership is diverse, including reinsurance underwriters and intermediaries licensed in the United States and those that conduct business on a cross border basis. The RAA represents its members before state, federal and international bodies.

The CHAIRMAN. Senators will have until the close of business on Friday, July 11, to submit questions for the record. The nominees will have to the close on Monday, July 14, to respond to those questions. That concludes today's hearing. The Committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:30 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. ROGER WICKER TO
NEIL JACOBS

Question 1. Seafood production is a major economic driver in my state, generating hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of jobs annually. The United States only imports about 80 percent of the seafood we eat, and we have a seafood trade deficit of over \$20 billion. The U.S. can and should urgently address this seafood deficit—and that starts with producing more fresh, healthy, and sustainable seafood at home through marine aquaculture.

NOAA oversees and manages our marine fisheries and aquaculture. NOAA must lead the way in addressing the seafood trade deficit by expanding our marine aquaculture. Do you commit to leading these efforts?

Answer. The recent Executive Order on Seafood Competitiveness, building on EO 13921, directs DOC and the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to assess seafood competitiveness issues and jointly develop a comprehensive seafood strategy, and convenes the interagency Seafood Trade Task Force co-chaired by USTR and DOC. If confirmed, I plan to use this vehicle to advance objectives to improve access to foreign markets, address unfair trade practices, and ensure a fair and competitive domestic market for U.S. seafood producers.

Question 2. Despite its economic and strategic importance, more than 80 percent of the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) remains unmapped at high resolution. High-tech ocean mapping, deep-sea exploration, and hydrographic surveys are essential for enhancing economic opportunities, improving national security, and ensuring maritime safety.

How do you plan to support NOAA's leadership in marine technology and expand ocean mapping, exploration, and characterization of our coastal and deep-sea resources?

Answer. In alignment with the Administration's priority of Unleashing America's Offshore Critical Minerals and Resources, if confirmed, I will ensure that NOAA continues to prioritize mapping and characterizing priority areas of the seabed, especially those with abundant offshore resources. In alignment with that Executive Order, I will coordinate with Federal agencies and the private sector to accelerate data collection within the U.S. Outer Continental Shelf. Additionally, I will ensure that NOAA continues to advance hydrographic surveys in support of maritime safety and a more competitive U.S. seafood industry.

During hurricane season, Mississippi regularly utilizes NOAA's Gulf of America Coastal Ocean Observing System (GCOOS). Will you commit to maintaining and expanding NOAA's hurricane research and real-time ocean monitoring in the Gulf through the Integrated Ocean Observing System?

Answer. I am supportive of NOAA continuing to give public access to regional ocean observing data, and will prioritize the integration of available federal, academic, private sector and non-profit ocean data. I remain committed to maintaining accessibility of ocean information in support of defense, maritime navigation, commerce, public health and safety, weather forecasting, fisheries, marine conservation and protected areas, and ocean and Great Lakes resource management.

Question 3. Sea Grant plays a vital role in supporting our Nation's coastal, Great Lakes, and ocean communities. It's especially important in Mississippi, where Sea Grant is active in supporting commercial and recreational fisheries and aquaculture to grow the blue economy. For more than 50 years, the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium has provided cost-effective, unbiased education, research, and workforce development that benefit our communities and economy.

How will you continue to support education and workforce development through the Sea Grant program?

Answer. Workforce development would be supported through NOAA's continued investments in foundational science and technology.

Question 4. The Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute (OECI) has and continues to support the Trump Administration's priorities through U.S. leadership in ocean exploration and technology development. The OECI is the go-to for critical minerals discovery in the ocean due their expertise with long-endurance autonomous surface and subsurface vehicles. This work is accelerated through public-private partnerships with industry.

What are your priorities for further implementation of public-private partnerships with NOAA Cooperative Institutes? How do you plan to utilize your authorities to incentivize innovative ocean research and training in the United States?

Answer. The Ocean Exploration Cooperative Institute (OECI) plays a critical role in advancing U.S. leadership in ocean exploration and technology. OECI's capabilities—especially in long-endurance autonomous surface and subsurface vehicles—are instrumental in accelerating the discovery of critical minerals through strong public private partnerships. If confirmed, I commit to continuing to leverage the E/V Nautilus, an OECI-affiliated vessel, to advance ocean science and support the Administration's priority of unlocking seabed mineral resources as well as identifying new opportunities to expand ocean exploration in alignment with national goals. Cooperative Institutes are an important component of NOAA's mission. My priority will be to maintain this mission by ensuring research remains focused, responsive, and tightly linked to the needs of the public.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. MARIA CANTWELL TO
NEIL JACOBS

NOAA Workforce Reductions. I have serious concerns about the current state of NOAA's workforce. Since January 2025, NOAA has lost a combined 27,000 years of experience. The resulting brain drain has impacted the entire agency. Overall, NOAA now has more than 3,000 vacant positions across the agency. I appreciated your commitment at the hearing that "staffing the Weather service offices is a top priority" but missions across NOAA's line offices are critical.

On February 19, 2025, I sent a letter to Secretary Lutnick urging him to protect NOAA's critical workforce from the Trump Administration's reduction-in-force initiatives and hiring freeze, which would jeopardize the safety of the American public. Despite this warning, about 600 probationary employees were fired across various NOAA line offices, and over 1,000 employees have left through voluntary separation programs. These staffing shortages are disrupting NOAA's core functions. For instance, weather balloon launches have been suspended, and multiple Weather Forecast Offices no longer able to staff overnight shifts.

Question 1. Yes or No: Do you believe NOAA can operate at its peak effectiveness when it has over 3,000 positions vacant?

Answer. If confirmed, my focus will be on ensuring we continue to deliver on our vital mission of science, service, and stewardship.

Question 2. Yes or No: Do you think that the agency's ability to carry out its mission effectively has been impacted by the loss of about 2,000 officials since January?

Answer. NOAA has identified its core mission and functions, and if confirmed, my focus will be on ensuring NOAA delivers on its important functions.

Question 3. Yes or No: Will you commit to rule out any further large-scale reductions to NOAA's workforce if confirmed?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure NOAA's mission effectiveness remains steadfast and without compromise through strategic workforce management and leveraging new technologies.

Question 4. Yes or No: Will you commit to fill these 3,000 vacant NOAA positions without delay if confirmed?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure NOAA has adequate staffing to effectively carry out its core, life-saving mission and strategic priorities.

Question 5. What specific steps would you take to ensure the National Weather Service has sufficient staff for all Weather Forecast Offices and to provide Americans with accurate and timely weather warnings?

Answer. If confirmed, I will immediately begin working with the National Weather Service and NOAA Office of Human Capital Services to ensure we have adequate staffing to effectively carry out its core, life-saving mission and strategic priorities.

Question 6. Will you ensure NOAA is adequately staffed so that Tribes are able to access meaningful government-to-government consultation and technical assistance on NOAA programs, including grants?

Answer. I support government-to-government consultations with Tribes.

Question 7. Executive Order 14170 implements a Federal hiring freeze, but it allows for exclusions for positions related to public safety. The National Weather Service has been given a limited exemption to rehire 126 positions. Do you intend to pursue an exemption to the hiring freeze under for any other NOAA positions? If so, which positions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will evaluate to determine how best to fulfill our critical mission areas across all NOAA offices.

Question 8. Will you commit to providing this Committee a full list detailing the number and duties of positions that have been terminated due to layoffs, deferred resignation, or early retirement since January 20, 2025?

Answer. I am not at NOAA, so I do not have access to this information. If confirmed, I will work with the Department to provide the Committee with appropriate staffing information.

Question 9. What is your plan for rebuilding the base of expertise that has been lost, ensuring that our science remains cutting edge, and retaining experts that are otherwise likely to leave for work in other nations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will evaluate our base of expertise to ensure that NOAA can be a global leader in science by creating an environment where our researchers are empowered, valued, and able to deliver cutting-edge results for the American people.

National Marine Fisheries Service. American fisheries are the best managed fisheries in the world because of science. However, recent staffing cuts and the ongoing Federal hiring freeze have left NOAA with a shortage of fishery managers, scientists, and vacancies for 180 mariners that NOAA needs to operate its ships.

As a result, 30 percent of NOAA's research vessel fleet will not leave the dock this summer, which will result in at least 6 stock assessments being cancelled. Without stock assessments, NOAA will have to lower harvest levels. That means fewer fish, fewer fishing jobs, and a damaging ripple effect throughout coastal economies that rely on seafood.

Question 1. Yes or No: Do you support a hiring freeze exemption for NOAA merchant mariners needed to get NOAA ships operational?

Answer. Yes.

Question 2. What is your plan to address stock assessment shortfalls, including cancellation of multiple pollock, salmon, and Gulf of Mexico surveys that red snapper and mackerel fishermen depend on?

Answer. If confirmed I will work with Congress to ensure NOAA has the needed resources to prioritize surveys, including by addressing professional mariner vacancies and retention, and expanding the use of uncrewed systems to augment NOAA's ability to conduct surveys.

Question 3. At the hearing you said you supported Pacific salmon. Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund (PCSRF) provides critical funding to facilitate the recovery of Pacific salmon and steelhead and the commercial, recreational, and tribal fisheries that rely on them. The FY 2026 Presidential Budget would eliminate funding for this program, which has restored salmon access to over 12,000 miles of streams and leveraged \$2.2 billion in non-PCSRF contributions. Do you commit to protecting the PCSRF program and to distributing FY 2025 PCSRF funds?

Answer. Pacific salmon are critically important to the culture, recreation, and economy of Washington and the nation, especially the five species of salmon in Washington: Chinook, Coho, Chum, Pink, and Sockeye. It is my understanding that some of the populations are not showing the expected levels of recovery. If confirmed, I would welcome the opportunity to learn more about various plans and projects to help promote recovery.

Question 4. Yes or No: Do you support further investments in Tribal salmon hatchery infrastructure?

Answer. I support the significant ecological and cultural benefits derived from well-managed hatchery programs. These facilities are essential for supporting the economic well-being of Tribal communities. NOAA will continue to lend its scientific expertise and collaborate closely with the Department of Interior and Tribal partners to ensure these services continue effectively.

Question 5. Yes or No: Do you support moving the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Office of Protected Resources, or any of their activities and functions out of NOAA? If yes, explain why.

Answer. NOAA's FY 2026 President's Budget request proposes to transfer Endangered Species Act (ESA) and Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) functions in the National Marine Fisheries Service Office of Protected Resources to the Department of Interior's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which would improve coordination

and efficiency, and streamline implementation of these statutes, reducing regulatory burden on American citizens and industry.

NOAA Organic Act and Weather Act. During Secretary Lutnick's confirmation hearing in January, he testified that he did not support breaking up and dismantling NOAA. Unfortunately, that's exactly what the Administration is doing via executive actions.

One way to ensure certainty about NOAA's products and services that American families rely upon is to authorize NOAA in statute.

Question 1. Yes or No: Do you support a NOAA Organic Act? If no, why not?

Answer. Yes. I believe NOAA is long overdue to have its mission authorized in statute. An organic act, at a high level, would provide clarity to NOAA's mission in statute. There is also value in not being overly prescriptive in an organic act to allow NOAA the flexibility to quickly evolve priorities and capabilities to improve its mission.

Question 2. How would having an Organic Act protect communities from these disasters?

Answer. An Organic Act would eliminate ambiguities arising from dispersed authorities and could explicitly state NOAA's comprehensive role in protecting against impacts from the environmental phenomena it monitors.

Question 3. Yes or No: Do you support the Weather Act Reauthorization? If no, why not?

Answer. Yes.

Northwest Fisheries Science Center. A significant portion of salmon research occurs at the Northwest Fisheries Science Center in Seattle. That building is in dire need of replacement. I previously secured funding for a new building that could be collocated with the University of Washington, but it was rescinded by the reconciliation bill.

Question 1. Do you support replacing the Northwest lab facility?

Answer. NOAA facilities, such as the Northwest Fisheries Science Center, are crucial for the agency's mission. These facilities support vital research, including that for Pacific salmon and steelhead recovery, which is critical to the economy, culture, and Tribal Treaty Rights in the Pacific Northwest. Investments in and replacement of these facilities is important but need to be approached in a manner that is realistic and sustainable. If confirmed, I will work with Congress, GSA, and partners on any appropriate steps related to the Northwest Fisheries Science Center.

Salmon Infrastructure. Salmon are central to the state of Washington's economy, culture, Tribal Treaty Rights, and our identity in the Pacific Northwest. We need a refined strategy with bold actions that restores critical habitats and advances innovative science to turn the tide on salmon declines so that we can make meaningful progress on salmon restoration.

Question 1. Yes or No: Do you support including salmon infrastructure, such as funding for hatcheries and culvert removal, in future infrastructure and surface transportation packages?

Answer. NOAA considers the Tribes key partners in fisheries management and will continue to work with them on fisheries issues.

Question 2. If confirmed, will you work with me to solve problems that harm salmon populations such as culverts and hazardous tire chemicals?

Answer. I understand the cultural and economic value of salmon and, if confirmed, will work with Congress on appropriate solutions to limit harm to this important resource.

Modernizing Satellites. In an exchange with Senator Capito regarding weather alerts, you referenced an opportunity to "modernize NOAA weather radio and potentially look at satellite capabilities."

Question 1. Can you elaborate on how you would like to modernize NOAA weather radio and satellite capabilities in this way?

Answer. NOAA Weather Radio is one of the most valuable communications tools available, but it relies heavily on copper wires for broadcast. However, this reliance on copper is expensive, limited, and susceptible to extreme temperatures. By leveraging satellite capabilities, NOAA could strengthen its communication tools and ensure more reliable broadcasts of weather alerts. This modernization could improve the dissemination of critical information, particularly during severe weather events. If confirmed, I will work with the National Weather Service and partners to better understand the possibilities and resources needed to modernize NOAA Weather Radio.

Question 2. Do you have concerns that a decreased NOAA budget will make it difficult to complete projects like this, which you called a “priority”?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure NOAA fulfills its mission requirements.

NOAA Communication. In an exchange with Senator Hickenlooper during your hearing, you testified, “I’m not in the agency yet.”

Question 1. Have you entered any NOAA or DOC facility since you were nominated on February 3, 2025? If yes, please specify the location, date, time, and circumstances for each instance.

Answer. A couple times in February and March I went to NCEP for community UFS meetings as part of my position at UCAR. I was in HCHB May 15th and 16th working on my questionnaire and getting it notarized. I was in DOC HCHB part of week 1 of June for some meet and greets and the NOAA Fish Fry. I went to both HCHB and SSMC3 June 10 and 11 to get some material for hearing prep and for a retirement party. HCHB July 1, 2, 7, 8th for hearing prep.

Question 2. Have you communicated with Secretary Lutnick or Deputy Secretary Dabbar since your nomination regarding any policy, program, or activity related to NOAA? If yes, please specify the date, subject matter, participants, and circumstances for each interaction.

Answer. I have had a few high-level conversations to discuss my onboarding if confirmed as well as a general meet-and-greet to get to know future colleagues.

Question 3. Have you provided advice on NOAA policy, programs, or operations with any NOAA or DOC official since your nomination not reflected in the above question? If yes, please specify the date, subject matter, participants, and circumstances for each interaction.

Answer. As part of my position with UCAR that deals with the UFS, I attended monthly virtual meetings for model development that were attended by NOAA employees. The community UFS is a community-led effort out of UCAR.

Dismantling the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The Trump Administration is pursuing a FY 2026 budget proposal that would reduce NOAA’s budget by 27 percent, eliminate Congressionally mandated programs, and transfer part of the National Marine Fisheries Service to the Interior Department.

During his confirmation hearing, Secretary Lutnick told me that he has, “no interest in separating” NOAA and that breaking up NOAA, “is not on my agenda.” Yet, that is exactly what the Administration is trying to do.

Question 1. Do you support any function, mission, or congressionally authorized or appropriated work within NOAA, or executed by NOAA, being moved out of the NOAA or the Department of Commerce? If yes, please describe.

Answer. I recognize the ongoing discussions regarding NOAA’s structure. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that NOAA’s critical missions—from weather forecasting to ocean and fisheries management—continue to be executed with the utmost effectiveness and scientific rigor, regardless of any potential organizational changes.

NOAA Research. As an atmospheric scientist, you understand the importance of scientific research and development. The FY 2026 Presidential Budget proposes eliminating the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) as a line office. The budget would terminate all funding for NOAA’s Research Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes, Regional Climate Data and Information, Climate Competitive Research, National Sea Grant College Program, and the National Oceanographic Partnership Program.

Question 1. Yes or no, do you support eliminating OAR? If yes, explain why.

Answer. I support the President’s budget request for NOAA. The budget request streamlines agency operations and prioritizes its public safety mission, while providing for efficiencies within NOAA research by more closely aligning operational and research components to foster collaboration and drive innovation. This realignment will strengthen delivery of actionable science to NOAA’s operational end-users and remains responsive to the needs of the public.

Question 2. Do you believe NOAA/NWS forecast improvements will flatline or degrade if this research is eliminated?

Answer. Research to support forecast improvements is being realigned to sit closer to the National Weather Service to strengthen the transition from research to operations.

Question 3. How do you define climate?

Answer. In the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017, “seasonal” is defined as the time range between 3 months and 2 years, and “subseasonal” is defined as the time range between 2 weeks and 3 months. It is implied that “climate” is the time range beyond seasonal.

Question 4. What do you believe is NOAA’s role in climate research?

Answer. NOAA’s mission to understand and predict changes in weather, oceans, climate, and coasts, and to provide this information to decision-makers. NOAA accomplishes this goal through long-term observations, cutting-edge modeling, and scientific analysis.

Question 5. Do you support fully funding NOAA’s Cooperative Institutes?

Answer. I support the President’s budget request to streamline agency operations, prioritize its public safety mission, and find efficiencies. My priority will be to maintain this mission by ensuring research remains focused, responsive, and tightly linked to the needs of the public.

Question 6. Do you support fully funding the NOAA Research Laboratories?

Answer. I support the President’s budget request to streamline agency operations, prioritize its public safety mission, and find efficiencies. I support the research capabilities provided by these laboratories and will ensure these capabilities continue to advance NOAA’s mission.

Question 7. The National Severe Storm Laboratory’s experimental Warn-on-Forecast System is working to improve lead times for tornado and severe weather warnings. Do you support continuing the Warn-on-Forecast System and similar weather research efforts?

Answer. Warn-on-Forecast is a very successful modeling system. Despite being considered a research project, it has been used operationally to assist in NWS’s public safety mission. I support transitioning programs such as this into operations to keep Americans safe.

Question 8. How will you ensure the safety of the American public if OAR programs that aim to prepare communities to face extreme weather events are dismantled?

Answer. I will continue to support NOAA’s mission of providing environmental data to decision makers and ensure that NOAA is adequately staffed to meet this mission. My understanding is that programs that support community preparedness for extreme weather are being realigned within the National Weather Service and National Ocean Service to ensure they are aligned with operational end-users.

Climate Adaptation Partnerships. There are 13 NOAA Climate Adaptation Partnership (CAP) teams around the country. And yet, the grant to only one, the Northwest Climate Resilience Collaborative (NCRC) based at the University of Washington, remains terminated by the Administration.

The NCRC team addresses unique needs of the region, including those related to extreme heat that led to more than 400 deaths in Washington due to the “heat dome” that descended on the region during the summer of 2021. NCRC also helps vulnerable populations to mitigate against the negative health effects of wildfire smoke and extreme heat.

Question 1. Could you provide us with the rationale for why this grant is the only one that remains terminated?

Answer. I appreciate your support for the CAP program. I am not privy to current administration actions.

Question 2. Another team has had its grant restored. What steps can the NCRC take to have its grant restored?

Answer. I am not privy to current administration actions.

Scientific Integrity. During your previous service as Acting NOAA Administrator, the Department of Commerce Inspector General found that NOAA officials, including you, issued statements under political pressure that contradicted the scientific forecasts from the National Weather Service. NOAA also commissioned an investigation by the National Academy of Public Administration that found you violated NOAA scientific integrity policies.

Question 1. Do you commit to uphold and abide by NOAA’s scientific integrity policy if confirmed?

Answer. I am committed to promoting scientific integrity within NOAA. I have valued, promoted and benefited from scientific integrity throughout my career, in academia, industry and at NOAA and will continue to champion it going forward.

Question 2. What specific lessons have you learned after being found to have violated NOAA’s scientific integrity policies?

Answer. I commit to rigorous adherence to and enforcement of scientific integrity policies to ensure NOAA's forecasts cannot be compromised.

Question 3. What specific steps will you take to ensure that NOAA's forecasts cannot be compromised and career scientists are empowered to publish and communicate their findings without political interference in the future?

Answer. I commit to rigorous adherence to and enforcement of scientific integrity policies to ensure NOAA's forecasts cannot be compromised.

Contract Review. Currently, all NOAA contracts and grants greater than \$100k require Secretary Lutnick's personal approval. There are thousands of contracts and grants that meet that threshold. As you can imagine, this has resulted in a significant bottleneck, causing critical contracts to terminate, lapse, or be signed mere hours before they expire.

Question 1. Do you support this practice?

Answer. Yes. I recognize the critical importance of timely and affective contract and grant execution to NOAA's mission. Following the Administration's Executive Orders on procurement and contracting, the Department of Commerce has implemented an updated review process for contracts and grants, including those over \$100,000. I am committed to working closely with the Department to ensure that this process protects integrity, while also allowing NOAA to carry out its responsibilities without unnecessary disruption.

Question 2. What will you do to ensure NOAA contracts are reviewed in a timely and efficient manner without inadvertent lapses?

Answer. I will work closely with NOAA and the Department of Commerce to assist in timely review of contracts.

Question 3. Will you commit to alerting Congress of the lapse or cancellation of any monetarily or operationally significant contracts in a timely manner?

Answer. I will work through the appropriate Congressional Affairs office and the Department of Commerce to ensure information is transmitted in a timely manner.

Geostationary Extended Observations (GeoXO) Satellite System. As the GOES-R satellites end their operational lifetime, the GeoXO satellites will replace them. Currently NOAA plans to launch six satellites with instruments including a lightning mapper (LMX), Sounder (GXS), Atmospheric Composition (ACX), Imager (GX1), and Ocean Color (OCX). The GeoXO Sounder will improve regional forecast accuracy by 40 percent and is tailored to improve forecasts of rapidly changing convective events like the severe storms that caused catastrophic flooding in Texas.

Question 1. Do you support NOAA's current plan for six satellites?

Answer. I am not privy to the status of current instrument contracts and their life-cycle procurement and management. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing the Agency's plans for their next generation geostationary satellite constellation.

Question 2. What can NOAA do to maintain the launch timeline and avoid a gap in coverage?

Answer. To maintain launch timelines and avoid data gaps, NOAA should ensure it works with its Federal partners and stakeholders on procurement schedules, system integration, and constellation management. NOAA should also, where appropriate and feasible, consider partnerships with other Federal agencies and the private sector for unique orbits and data that support public safety and operational readiness.

Question 3. The plan laid out for the GeoXO program under your leadership during the first Trump Administration also included economically beneficial ocean color, atmospheric composition, and lightning mapper observations. These instruments help us monitor air quality impacts from pollution and smoke, predict the intensity of hurricanes and respond to wildfires, and track ocean pollution, water quality, and hazards like harmful algal blooms that can impact fisheries and water supplies. Do you still support including instruments for these observations on GeoXO satellites?

Answer. I am not privy to the status of current instrument contracts and their life-cycle procurement and management. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing NOAA's plan for the GeoXO constellation. I will continue to support NOAA's observing networks that improve NOAA's mission.

Question 4. Do you support cancelling existing contracts that would incur large penalties?

Answer. I am not privy to the status of current contracts or procurement decisions. The Administration is committed to cost efficiency and ending wasteful government spending. If confirmed, I will continue to support networks that improve NOAA's mission and support public safety while balancing budgetary constraints.

Fisheries. According to the latest statistics from 2022, U.S. commercial and recreational fisheries generated \$321 billion in sales, 2.3 million jobs, and \$149.8 billion in value-added to the U.S. economy. Commercial fisheries landings alone were valued at \$5.9 billion, and recreational fishermen took 201 million fishing trips that year. Communities across the country rely on these fisheries and the benefits they provide. They also rely on NOAA Fisheries providing world class science and management to support this fishing activity.

Question 1. Will you commit to investing effort and resources into improving fishery data systems, navigating climate change, and other pressures on fisheries?

Answer. I look forward to working with all stakeholders to address pressures on American fisheries. In addition to promoting the production, sale, and trade of U.S. fishery and aquaculture products, embracing new technologies and science-based approaches to stock assessments will benefit both the U.S. commercial fishing industry and recreational fishing community.

Question 2. Will you commit to ensuring stock assessment surveys are completed?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure NOAA has the needed resources to prioritize surveys, including addressing professional mariner vacancies and retention, and expanding the use of uncrewed systems to augment NOAA's ability to conduct surveys.

Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS). IOOS provides real-time data that are a critical part of accurate weather forecasting and provide information that keep fishermen, mariners, and recreational boaters safe while at sea. They also provide information that is essential for harmful algal bloom forecasting. However, the administration has proposed eliminating funding for regional IOOS networks.

Question 1. Do you support this critical program that aids in weather forecasting, benefits our Nation's fisheries, supports commerce, and keeps Americans safe on the water?

Answer. I am supportive of NOAA continuing to give public access to regional ocean observing data, and will prioritize the integration of available federal, academic, private sector and non-profit ocean data. I remain supportive of maintaining accessibility of ocean information in support of defense, maritime navigation, commerce, public health and safety, weather forecasting, fisheries, marine conservation and protected areas, and ocean and Great Lakes resource management.

Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported (IUU) Fishing. IUU fishing is a key driver of global overfishing that threatens marine ecosystems, food security, and regional stability. It's a major global challenge that requires a whole-of-government approach by U.S. agencies for effective data collection, sharing of information, and enforcement efforts. The recent Executive Order 14276 on seafood competitiveness emphasized the urgency of protecting U.S. markets and maritime security from threats posed by IUU fishing and those products entering U.S. supply chains. It explicitly calls for enhanced Federal efforts to counter IUU fishing, improve traceability of seafood products, and coordinate more effectively across agencies, including CBP, Coast Guard, and the State Department. Given the scale of the threat and the vulnerabilities in U.S. seafood supply chains, this EO represents an opportunity and responsibility for NOAA to lead and act quickly.

Question 1. What actions will you take to ensure NOAA's efforts to address IUU fishing is prioritized and sufficiently resourced?

Answer. Combating IUU fishing is critical to protecting American seafood competitiveness. If confirmed, I will ensure that NOAA is advancing stronger enforcement, expanding the Seafood Import Monitoring Program, and working with global partners to close loopholes that allow illegally caught fish into the U.S. market.

Question 2. What actions will you take to improve coordination between NOAA and other agencies and ensure a whole-of-government approach to combating IUU fishing?

Answer. The recent Executive Order on Seafood Competitiveness, building on EO 13921, directs DOC and the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to assess seafood competitiveness issues and jointly develop a comprehensive seafood strategy, and convenes the interagency Seafood Trade Task Force co-chaired by USTR and DOC. If confirmed, I plan to use this vehicle to advance objectives to improve access to foreign markets, address unfair trade practices, and ensure a fair and competitive domestic market for U.S. seafood producers.

Extreme Weather. According to NOAA, since 1980 we've had an average of nine extreme weather events annually that cost over \$1 billion each. However, in the last five years, that has spiked to 23 events per year, and last year it was 27 events. Climate change is driving more intense hurricanes, more frequent severe atmos-

pheric rivers, rain events, and is doubling the number of wildfires. NOAA plays a principal role in ensuring the American public is informed and prepared to respond to extreme weather events.

Question 1. As extreme weather events across the country become more frequent, what do you believe is NOAA's role in coordinating resilience and response efforts?

Answer. NOAA's role in coordinating resilience and response efforts is central to supporting the U.S. government's ability to respond to extreme weather events. NOAA provides authoritative data, tools, and forecasts to decision-makers.

Question 2. How will you improve NOAA's cooperation with local emergency managers during extreme weather events?

Answer. NOAA plays a crucial role in supporting emergency managers before, during and after hazardous weather events. This relationship between NOAA and emergency managers is built around communication, coordination, and data sharing to help protect lives and property. If confirmed, I will prioritize improvements including adopting new technologies, embedding of NWS staff in Emergency Operations Centers to provide face-to-face support, and continued enhancement of NWS's messaging and impact-based decision support services.

Question 3. NOAA/NWS radars are nearing end of life. What plan would you enact as NOAA Administrator to ensure these crucial instruments are upgraded and replaced with little to no interruption of data?

Answer. The National Weather Service radars are reaching the end of their life span in the 2030s. NWS is actively working on a plan to upgrade and/or replace radars. If confirmed, I will work with NOAA lines offices to ensure NOAA radar systems continue to meet mission requirements, and that advanced planning is underway to eventually replace these systems in the future using the best available science and innovation.

Commercial Data and Services. Project 2025 proposes that "NWS should fully commercialize its forecasting operations" and encourages increased use of private sector data and services. As a government agency funded by taxpayer money, NOAA is a trusted source of free, reliable data.

Question 1. What do you see as NOAA's core government functions that cannot be privatized or commercialized, particularly at NWS and NESDIS?

Answer. NOAA's public safety mission and its weather forecasting are core government functions that Americans across the country rely on every day. NOAA has historically utilized data and expertise from non-government sources to help it create and improve its weather models. NOAA relies heavily on non-governmental partners to help build its observing networks and infrastructure. However, the products and services derived from these observing systems and infrastructure are a core government function.

Question 2. How will you ensure that NOAA avoids "vendor lock" when incorporating more commercial data and services?

Answer. NOAA takes commercial marketplace offerings into consideration when reviewing potential new sources of data. Increased use of industry engagement, such as industry days, general requests for information, and advanced planning can help ensure NOAA has an adequate understanding of commercial capabilities, and where these capabilities align NOAA mission needs.

Question 3. Currently, NOAA data is openly available to the public, but if NOAA buys data from private companies using taxpayer money, how will you ensure data will be made publicly available?

Answer. NOAA's products and services are made available to the public. NOAA has historically acquired data from non-traditional or non-governmental partners, often with open redistribution licenses. There have been instances of limited redistribution restrictions; however, NOAA and government end-users, as well as researchers, typically have access to these datasets through research-only agreements or with time-lagged full access.

Question 4. Do you agree that NOAA satellites and associated ground and data systems are core public infrastructure and a national security asset?

Answer. NOAA's current satellites and ground systems in use are taxpayer funded public infrastructure and national security assets.

Climate Change

Question 1. Yes or No: Do you agree with the scientific consensus that human activity is the primary cause of climate change?

Answer. In the absence of various short-term natural forcings that can often dominate the surface and lower-tropospheric temperature measurements, humans do have an impact through greenhouse gas emissions.

Question 2. Yes or No: Do you agree with the scientific consensus that climate change is driving more intense and more frequent severe weather events?

Answer. Scientific consensus, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's latest Assessment Report (AR6, Chapter 12, Table 12.12), is not uniform across each type and event, with some events such as tropical cyclones, heavy precipitation, and floods receiving low confidence in observed trends, while other events are listed as medium confidence. NOAA will continue to work to understand and predict changes in the weather, oceans, climate, and coasts.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. EDWARD MARKEY TO
NEIL JACOBS

Question 1. Do you agree that warming waters, caused by climate change, are causing fish stocks to shift from their traditional ports? If confirmed, how would you support adaptive fisheries management policies and initiatives?

Answer. I recognize that many stocks are shifting. If confirmed, I will focus on maintaining scientific assessment capabilities within NOAA Fisheries, leveraging data and modeling advancements, and providing actionable decision support to our management partners.

Do you believe that eliminating funding to interjurisdictional fisheries grants will help fishermen deal with shifting stocks? If yes, please explain why.

Answer. I recognize that many stocks are shifting, resulting in increased operational costs and challenges for the American fishing fleet. If confirmed, I will work to identify ways to support fishermen dealing with shifting stocks, including through grants, technology and modeling advancements, and provision of data and actionable decision support to our management partners.

Question 2. The Trump budget would cut the National Marine Fisheries Service by 33 percent, zeroing out programs that include interjurisdictional fisheries grants, species recovery funds, and salmon programs. The proposal also cuts fisheries management programs and services by 25 percent.

Do you believe that cutting funds intended to aid fish species recovery will support American seafood competitiveness? If yes, please explain why.

Answer. I support the President's Budget. The recent Executive Order on Seafood Competitiveness, building on EO 13921, directs DOC and the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to assess seafood competitiveness issues and jointly develop a comprehensive seafood strategy, and convenes the interagency Seafood Trade Task Force co-chaired by USTR and DOC. I plan to use this vehicle to advance objectives to improve access to foreign markets, address unfair trade practices, and ensure a fair and competitive domestic market for U.S. seafood producers.

Do you believe reduced funding to fisheries management programs will support American fishermen in getting up-to-date information, quotas, and Federal aid? If yes, please explain why reduced resources for this service will support American fishermen.

Answer. Supporting American fishermen is a priority of this Administration. If confirmed, I commit to evaluating all options and resources to achieve that goal.

Question 3. How do you plan to ensure that fisheries surveys take place on time across the nation, following the reductions in force and budget—especially considering American fishermen are already experiencing ongoing lapses in survey data caused by insufficient funds?

Answer. If confirmed, I will focus on addressing professional mariner vacancies and retention and expanding the use of uncrewed systems to augment NOAA's ability to conduct surveys.

Question 4. The President's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026 eliminates NOAA's primary research arm—the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR). This would zero out funding for vital weather and climate research programs that enable reliable, accurate forecasting, and a better understanding of the climate crisis. You testified that OAR programs will simply be reorganized into different offices, yet many critical OAR programs that are necessary to Massachusetts and the rest of the Nation are zeroed out and not simply moved. Do you believe that eliminating funding for the research and science that underpins National Weather Service and National Ocean Service data result in improved forecasting? If yes, please explain how.

Answer. I support the President's budget request for NOAA. The budget request streamlines agency operations and prioritizes its public safety mission, while providing for efficiencies within NOAA research by more closely aligning operational and research components to foster collaboration and drive innovation. This realign-

ment will strengthen delivery of actionable science to NOAA's operational end-users and remains responsive to the needs of the public. If confirmed, I will continue to support NOAA's mission of providing environmental data to decision makers and ensure that NOAA is adequately staffed to meet this mission. My understanding is that programs that support community preparedness for extreme weather are being realigned within the National Weather Service and National Ocean Service to ensure they are aligned with operational end-users.

Question 5. During our meeting, you agreed that ocean observations are critically important for accurate weather forecasting. During your nomination hearing, when asked about how you would improve weather forecasting, you said accurate forecasting relies on "more and better observations because these predictions are initial value problems." The President's Budget zeroes out the Integrated Ocean Observing System (IOOS), and the Sustainable Ocean Observation and Monitoring (SOOM) system budget would be cut significantly and is set to be moved under the National Ocean Service. In addition to all of the data these systems provide to researchers and others who work on or around the ocean, the Navy relies on utilizing NOAA sensor buoys to forecast how water conditions will affect submarine communications and operations, making them critical to our national defense.

Will you commit to advocate for observations and monitoring services?

Answer. I support public access to regional ocean observing data and will prioritize the integration of available federal, academic, private sector and non-profit ocean data.

Will you ensure that these observing systems are able to provide undiminished and accurate data to the American people, our military, and small business owners?

Answer. I will work to maintain the accessibility of ocean information in support of defense, maritime navigation, commerce, public health and safety, weather forecasting, fisheries, marine conservation and protected areas, and ocean and Great Lakes resource management.

Question 6. You have previously voiced support for Sea Grant. To all 34 states with a Sea Grant program, Sea Grant is part of their core capabilities. Sea Grant is a smart and cost-effective investment in our coastal communities—in 2023, Sea Grant's return on investment of \$94 million was nearly a full order of magnitude at a whopping \$828 million.

Do you support the Sea Grant program?

Answer. The President's budget request clearly focuses Federal spending.

If eliminated, how would NOAA achieve Sea Grant's extension work, workforce development, and local innovation roles that are vital to American seafood competitiveness?

Answer. NOAA would support essential aspects of extension work and local innovation by focusing on data dissemination within NOAA Fisheries and the National Ocean Service.

Workforce development would be supported through NOAA's continued investments in foundational science and technology.

Question 7. During our meeting, you spoke of the need for proactive measures that can prevent and mitigate devastating loss of life and property caused by severe weather events turbocharged by the climate crisis. The President's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026 would eliminate funding for NOAA's Climate Adaptation Partnerships Program. This program funds projects that improve risk communication during wildfires and storm surges and allow localities and states to create effective heat response plans. Projects like these can help us protect critical infrastructure, preserve homes, but most importantly—save lives.

Do you support the elimination of this program?

Answer. I support high priority ocean and weather research programs in the National Ocean Service and the National Weather Service.

If yes, how will you ensure that the proactive measures you claim to support can be deployed successfully at the local and state level, where they are needed most?

Answer. If confirmed, my focus will be on providing critical scientific data and actionable insights that empower local and state planners to develop their own strategies.

Question 8. In spite of increasingly severe and frequent weather events, NOAA has lost more than 1,875 employees since the start of this administration—amounting to a collective 27,000 years of expertise lost. During your confirmation hearing, you expressed support for National Weather Service staff at regional forecasting offices. If nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary and NOAA Administrator, will you commit to restoring staff levels at NWS forecasting offices to ensure that NOAA accomplishes its mission?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the National Weather Service and NOAA Office of Human Capital Services to ensure we have adequate staffing to effectively carry out its core, life-saving mission and strategic priorities.

If not, how will you deliver on NOAA's mission without adequate NWS staffing levels?

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH TO
NEIL JACOBS

NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR), with a \$738 million budget, funds a wealth of research programs including 10 major labs and 16 cooperative institutes—university-based research centers responsible for roughly half of NOAA's scientific research. The NOAA FY26 budget request terminates OAR, which includes these Climate Laboratories, Cooperative Institutes and research programs and all of the research that goes along with them.

The former head of OAR, Craig McLean stated these cuts would cripple U.S. global leadership on climate and ocean science, sending us back to the 1950s. He also said NOAA's research is inseparable from the agency's mission and that eliminating it would disrupt everything from tracking fish migration to forecasting hurricanes, heatwaves, wildfires and deadly floods.

Question 1. Do you believe that NOAA's research is inseparable from the agency's mission, and critical in supporting key economic sectors and advancing vital national interests related to public safety, disaster preparedness and emergency response? Please explain.

Answer. NOAA's mission is vital to protecting lives, property, natural resources, and economic well-being.

Question 2. Do you believe OAR and the major labs and cooperative institutes contribute critical work to our national research?

Answer. OAR programs that support community preparedness for severe weather are being realigned to ensure their work is more directly connected to operational programs within the National Weather Service and National Ocean Service. This realignment will strengthen delivery of actionable science to NOAA's operational end-users and remains responsive to the needs of the public. If confirmed, I will continue to support NOAA's mission of providing environmental data to decision makers and ensure that NOAA is adequately staffed to meet this mission.

Question 3. Please explain how you will ensure these labs are staffed with the necessary experts and that their services will continue to deliver the science, data and resources to State agencies and the public that rely on them?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that NOAA's critical missions—from weather forecasting to ocean and fisheries management—continue to be executed with the utmost effectiveness and scientific rigor, regardless of any potential organizational changes.

The Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab (GLERL) is a Cooperative Institute within the OAR. It is a NOAA regional center for innovative research that is critical in developing coastal forecast systems and toxic algal bloom forecasting, informing the restoration and management of sustainable ecosystems and resilient communities.

Question 1. How will you maintain these Cooperative Institutes' labs, research and other services that they provide that are essential to public health of the Nation and the health of the Great Lakes?

Answer. My priority will be to maintain this mission by ensuring research remains focused, responsive, and tightly linked to the needs of the public.

Question 2. Please explain how will NOAA continue to be an effective partner in the implementation of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative when President Trump is seeking to terminate programs that support this bipartisan initiative?

Answer. I support the President's Budget. Even without dedicated program support for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, NOAA would still serve as the authoritative Federal source for foundational scientific capabilities essential to the Great Lakes.

Professional complaints were filed against you based on your involvement in Trump's inaccurate statements and use of a Sharpie pen to ridiculously, and falsely, mislead the public into believing that the National Weather Service (NWS) originally projected the storm area for Hurricane Dorian to include Alabama. This was a major scandal because it involved President Trump providing the public with incorrect information about the projected path of a dangerous Hurricane, and when corrected—instead of humbly acknowledging his mistake and thanking the NWS for

correcting his erroneous warning—the President willfully and knowingly falsified an agency exhibit with a Sharpie pen in an effort to blame NWS for the inaccurate storm warning he tweeted to the people of Alabama. In a pathetic act of cowardice and sycophancy, under your leadership, NOAA sent an unsigned letter to NWS criticizing the agency for correcting the President’s incorrect storm path warning. This scandal resulted in NOAA’s Scientific Integrity Officer initiating an independent investigation that was conducted by the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA).

NAPA found you violated NOAA’s Code of Ethics for Science Supervision and Management in two of the three complaints. Specifically, NAPA found that you “engaged in misconduct intentionally, knowingly or in reckless disregard of the Code of Scientific Conduct or Code of Ethics for Science Supervision and Management in NOAA’s Scientific Integrity Policy.”

Question 1. Do you concur with NAPA that you “engaged in misconduct intentionally, knowingly or in reckless disregard of the Code of Scientific Conduct or Code of Ethics for Science Supervision and Management in NOAA’s Scientific Integrity Policy”?

Answer. If confirmed, I will lead NOAA knowing that every action taken under my leadership will uphold transparency, rigor, and the unimpeded communication of scientific findings.

Question 2. Effective leaders lead by example, shaping an organization’s culture less with words than through demonstrated actions that exemplify the honor, integrity and values expected of all employees. Given an independent NAPA investigation determined that as Acting Administrator, you failed to uphold the Code of Scientific Conduct or the Code of Ethics for Science Supervision and Management in NOAA’s Scientific Integrity Policy, why should this committee have confidence in your ability to lead NOAA and ensure agency compliance with all ethical codes related to scientific conduct and integrity?

Answer. I commit to rigorous adherence to and enforcement of scientific integrity policies to ensure NOAA’s forecasts cannot be compromised.

Question 3. What specific actions will you take to uphold NOAA’s Scientific Integrity Policy and protect career scientists from political or commercial interference in their work?

Answer. I am committed to promoting scientific integrity within NOAA.

Question 4. Will you commit to publicly disclosing any meetings or communications you have with former employers, former clients or former contractors related to NOAA’s operations or contracting decisions?

Answer. Per my ethics agreement, I am recused from holding meetings with or being involved in contracting decisions involving former employers.

The horrific weather events in Texas further iterate the need for public, free, government-backed reliable and innovative weather forecasting and data. We cannot put people’s lives at stake by turning weather forecasting and information into a subscription service. This would turn weather and safety information into just one more thing that would intentionally and disproportionately place economically disadvantaged households in harm’s way.

Question 1. Given NOAA’s statutory obligation to provide free, government-backed weather and climate information, do you support continued public access to NOAA data without restriction or privatization?

Answer. I remain committed to maintaining accessibility of ocean information in support of defense, maritime navigation, commerce, public health and safety, weather forecasting, fisheries, marine conservation and protected areas, and ocean and Great Lakes resource management. In 2019, under my leadership, NOAA unveiled the Big Data Project, now called NOAA Open Data Dissemination, that improved public access to all NOAA data through partnerships with cloud service providers.

Question 2. Please explain your view on the role of private-sector weather providers in relation to NOAA.

Answer. I am committed to continuing NOAA’s status as the authoritative source for environmental data used to support the public, private, and academic sectors.

Question 3. How will you ensure that NOAA’s science and data remain accessible to the public, free from politicization or commercial barriers?

Answer. I support public access to relevant data. If confirmed, I will ensure that NOAA’s critical mission will continue to be executed with the utmost effectiveness and scientific rigor.

Question 4. How will you ensure NOAA programs, especially in climate resilience and weather forecasting, are equitably serving underserved and vulnerable communities?

Answer. NOAA has a responsibility to serve the American public. I am committed to ensuring that NOAA lives up to that responsibility.

President Joe Biden was the certified winner of the 2020 presidential election.

Question 1. Please answer with “yes” or “no”. Was President Biden certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election because President Biden received more votes than President Trump in the 2020 presidential election?

Answer. Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

Question 2. Please answer with “yes” or “no”. Did President Trump lose the 2020 presidential election?

Answer. Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

Question 3. Please answer with “yes” or “no”. Did President Trump lose the popular vote in the 2020 presidential election?

Answer. Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

Question 4. Please answer with “yes” or “no”. Did President Trump lose the electoral college in the 2020 presidential election?

Answer. Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

Question 5. If you were unable or unwilling to provide a “yes” or “no” answer to any of the prior questions, please provide a detailed explanation justifying your refusal to provide such a clear and simple answer, including whether your refusal to provide a simple “yes” or “no” answer indicates that you believe President Trump received more votes than President Biden in the 2020 presidential election.

Answer. See my responses to questions 1–4 above.

The 14th Amendment states. “*No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.*”

Question 1. Where were you on January 6, 2021?

Answer. I was at home in Arlington, VA.

Question 2. Do you believe the events at the Capitol on January 6, 2021, were an insurrection, a rebellion against the Constitution of the United States, or both—and if you do not believe the events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol on that date comprised an insurrection or rebellion against the Constitution, please provide a detailed explanation explaining your belief.

This question is outside of the scope of my nomination to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

Question 3. Why did you choose to resign, or choose not to resign, as Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere on January 6, 2021, or in the following days?

Answer. I chose to serve until the end of my term on January 20, 2021.

Question 4. Do you support President Trump’s decision to “grant a full, complete and unconditional pardon to all other individuals convicted of offenses related to events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021”?

Answer. This question is outside of the scope of my nomination to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere.

Question 5. Do you believe President Trump’s decision to “grant a full, complete and unconditional pardon to all other individuals convicted of offenses related to events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021” is consistent with supporting law enforcement?

Answer. This question is outside of the scope of my nomination to be Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, but I have always rejected violence against law enforcement.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. JOHN HICKENLOOPER TO
NEIL JACOBS

The Office of Oceanic & Atmospheric Research (OAR) is the key scientific arm of NOAA. NOAA's research and services are mission critical functions that can save countless lives. OAR plays a key role in supporting key research missions across the Earth System Research Laboratories, partner universities, and Cooperative Institutes in Boulder, CO.

Question 1. Please restate your response for the record—do you believe the U.S. is making the necessary investments into scientific research *and* operational services through NOAA? Why or why not?

Answer. If confirmed as NOAA Administrator, my focus will always be on maximizing the impact of NOAA's diverse capabilities for the benefit of the Nation.

Question 2. Within NOAA's purview, which fields of science do you believe require the most urgent attention by the agency? What outcomes do you hope to achieve or better understand in this stated field?

Answer. Earth system science is the interplay between many fields that NOAA deals with. To better predict the future state of the oceans or atmosphere, we need to better understand the various systems and how they interact.

Question 3. How can the U.S. remain the world leader in scientific research and weather forecasting over other competitors?

Answer. If confirmed, one of my top priorities is to return the United States to the world's leader in global weather forecast modeling. As a matter of public safety, national security, and national pride, we will restore American technological superiority for this vital service for the country and our military serving around the world. This will require embracing new technologies, novel approaches, and partnering with industry to advance global observing systems.

Question 4. What do you believe would be the consequences if the functions of OAR are discontinued or reorganized into the National Weather Service (NWS)? Do you believe the NWS is prepared to take on these additional responsibilities?

Answer. If confirmed, my goal will be to accelerate the application of cutting-edge science into real-time forecasting, improve collaboration between researchers and forecasters, and ultimately deliver more accurate and timely information to the public.

Question 5. Will you commit to resisting all forms of political pressure when it comes to any decision related to NOAA's research, services, or funding appropriated by Congress?

Answer. I will promote scientific integrity within NOAA. I have valued, promoted and benefited from scientific integrity throughout my career, in academia, industry and at NOAA and will continue to champion it going forward.

Cooperative institutes maximize Federal investments by leveraging academic infrastructure and external funding to amplify NOAA's capabilities. NOAA's Cooperative Institutes across the nation—such as the Cooperative Institute for Research in Environmental Sciences (CIRES) and the Cooperative Institute for Research in the Atmosphere (CIRA) in Colorado—are vital partners in advancing NOAA's mission. These Institutes support everything from disaster forecasting to ecosystem monitoring, while also training the next generation of scientists and supporting regional economies. Their work represents a highly efficient Federal investment that leverages academic infrastructure and external funding to amplify NOAA's capabilities.

Question 6. If confirmed, how would you increase NOAA's use of Cooperative Institutes to effectively deliver public services (*e.g.*, disaster forecasting, ecosystem monitoring)?

Answer. The Cooperative Institutes should prioritize research that has a path to operations, while at the same time considering reducing parallel and potentially redundant projects.

Question 7. Will you commit to preserving the funding, resources, and partnerships NOAA has formed with all 16 Cooperative Institutes across the U.S.?

Answer. If confirmed, my priority will be to ensure research remains focused, responsive, and tightly linked to the needs of the public.

The United States' ability to accurately forecast extreme weather can help communities avoid catastrophe and save lives. Natural disasters cost the U.S. over \$182 billion in damages last year alone. Reports indicate NOAA has stopped updating the database managed by the National Center for Environmental Information that tracks natural disasters which cause over \$1 billion in damages. This will limit the scope of existing disaster records to only those that occurred between 1980 through

2024. Between 2020 and 2024, the frequency of natural disasters increased to a rough average of 23 per year.

Question 8. Is our ability to forecast natural disasters an economic and national security imperative?

Answer. Yes.

Question 9. Will you commit to restoring and updating NOAA's database managed by the National Center for Environmental Information that tracks natural disasters that cause over \$1 billion in damages?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that whatever data NCEI is collecting and managing will be made publicly available.

Question 10. What do you believe is driving the increasing frequency of major natural disasters in the U.S.?

Answer. It really depends on what sort of natural disaster is being considered. When assessing trends of "extreme storms", according to the IPCC's AR6 Chapter 11, there is low confidence in trends related to tropical storm frequency (11.7.1.2), extratropical cyclones (11.7.2.1), and severe convection (11.7.3). This does not necessarily imply there is not a physical trend related to warming. There are historical data in homogeneities and limitations in instrumentation that make building long term datasets challenging. NOAA will continue to work to observe, understand, and predict changes in the weather, oceans, climate, and coasts.

The National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center monitors drought and forecasts the outlook for the rain and snow to come. Long-term aridification is decreasing water availability across the West—especially in the Colorado River Basin, in its worst drought for 1,200 years.

Question 11. Will you commit the resources necessary to maintain NOAA's key role in understanding drought and managing water scarcity?

Answer. NOAA's role in understanding, forecasting, and communicating drought and other water security issues is vital to the American public. If confirmed, I will work to accelerate the application of cutting-edge science into real-time forecasting, improve collaboration between researchers and forecasters, and ultimately deliver more accurate and timely information to the public.

Since January 2025, NOAA and its National Weather Service have seen drastic reductions in force, which reduces our ability to forecast extreme weather.

Question 12. What steps would you take to ensure that NOAA continues to invest in workforce development—including through its Cooperative Institutes and academic partnerships—to conduct scientific research or support operational capabilities?

Answer. If confirmed, I will evaluate our base of expertise, to ensure that NOAA can be a global leader in science by creating an environment where our researchers are empowered, valued, and able to deliver cutting-edge results for the American people. This includes working with stakeholders in workforce development. Workforce development will be supported through NOAA's continued investments in foundational science and technology, aiming to train experts needed for our modernized forecasting.

The United States' ability to accurately forecast extreme weather can help communities avoid catastrophe and save lives. Natural disasters cost the U.S. over \$182 billion in damages last year alone.

Question 13. Will you commit to restoring and updating NOAA's database managed by the National Center for Environmental Information that tracks natural disasters that cause over \$1 billion in damages?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to ensuring that the data NCEI is collecting and managing will be made publicly available and kept up to date.

Question 14. Given recent efforts to restrict or eliminate access to key NOAA databases, will you commit to restoring public access to scientific data and halting any further attempts to obscure, delete, or withhold information from the public?

Answer. I remain committed to maintaining accessibility of ocean information in support of defense, maritime navigation, commerce, public health and safety, weather forecasting, fisheries, marine conservation and protected areas, and ocean and Great Lakes resource management. In 2019, under my leadership, NOAA unveiled the Big Data Project, now called NOAA Open Data Dissemination, that improved public access to all NOAA data through partnerships with cloud service providers.

Question 15. Is our ability to forecast natural disasters an economic and national security imperative?

Answer. Yes.

NOAA's Fire Weather Testbed, based in Boulder, CO, helps increase wildfire resilience by researching and testing the use of monitoring technologies to become operational for land managers and first responders.

Question 16. How will you ensure NOAA continues to play a key role in advancing research and mitigation strategies to prevent wildfires?

Answer. My thoughts continue to be with the people of Colorado who have suffered from past wildfires and those currently impacted in Chaffee County and elsewhere. If confirmed, my goal is to accelerate the application of cutting-edge science into real-time forecasting, improve collaboration between researchers and forecasters, and ultimately deliver more accurate and timely information to the public.

NOAA's services help regions conserve water, farmers increase crops yields, and land managers maintain or cultivate natural resources. Recent reports indicate the Secretary of Commerce is reviewing every Federal award valued at more than \$100,000. Scientists have warned that awards are frozen during this review, at times simply because the term 'sustainability' appears in a program title or project description.

Question 17. In light of recent freezes to Federal grants administered by NOAA, what does the term "sustainability" mean to you? Please describe how you view NOAA's mission with respect to sustainability.

Answer. "Sustainability" means resource longevity and economic viability, primarily achieved through core scientific assessment, monitoring, and management advice.

Question 18. How will you ensure NOAA's academic and research partnerships are not jeopardized by administrative delays or political interference, and that these vital collaborations remain uninterrupted and well-supported?

Answer. I recognize the critical importance of timely and affective contract and grant execution to NOAA's mission. Following the Administration's Executive Orders on procurement and contracting, the Department of Commerce has implemented an updated review process for contracts and grants, including those over \$100,000. I am committed to working closely with the Department to ensure that this process protects integrity, while also allowing NOAA to carry out its responsibilities.

NOAA and many scientific researchers rely on spectrum to capture space-based observations of the Earth through remote sensing. Various spectrum frequencies are allocated to Federal agencies, including NOAA, and used to monitor the on-orbit location of satellites and communicate key datasets from space to scientists and forecasters here on Earth.

Question 19. Do you believe NOAA has access to the necessary spectrum frequencies without interference from commercial users?

Answer. Ensuring that NOAA has continued access to frequencies for transmitting data without interference is extremely critical.

NOAA and the National Weather Service provide essential aviation weather data and analysis for use by the FAA, pilots, and air traffic controllers. This information can have far-reaching impacts and can make the difference between deciding it's safe enough to take off, choosing to stay on the ground due to incoming weather, or making mid-flight decisions about altitude or direction.

Question 20. How will you ensure that NOAA maintains all the resources necessary to continue to provide this vital service that impacts the safety of so many people every day?

Answer. If confirmed, I will immediately begin working with the National Weather Service and NOAA Office of Human Capital Services to ensure we have adequate staffing to effectively carry out its core, life-saving mission and strategic priorities.

As required by the first Trump Administration, Space Policy Directive-3 required the Department of Defense to begin transitioning the collection and dissemination of space situational awareness (SSA) information and space traffic coordination (STC) responsibilities to the Department of Commerce. On a bipartisan basis, Congress has appropriated funds to the Office of Space Commerce within NOAA to develop the necessary capabilities, in partnership with private sector entities, to improve SSA on-orbit to avoid collisions and increase U.S. competitiveness in space. NOAA has continued this work by developing the Traffic Coordination System for Space (TraCSS) in line with Congressional intent.

Question 21. Do you support the Office of Space Commerce continuing this work in managing TraCSS as required under SPD-3? Yes or no?

Answer. I am a strong advocate for American leadership in space and the role of the Office of Space Commerce. I believe that robust government-commercial partnerships are essential for space situational awareness, aligning with Congressional in-

tent and Space Policy Directive 3 (SPD-3), and I will ensure that NOAA's investments in these programs are effectively leveraged.

Question 22. Do you believe increasing amounts of space debris and traffic from orbiting satellites in space requires more, or less, SSA? Yes or no?

Answer. Space situational awareness will remain essential for safety sustainability and continued growth of the U.S. commercial space sector.

Question 23. Do you believe, in addition to SSA, the United States could benefit from developing technologies that can remove or remediate existing space debris? Yes or no?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on the escalating challenge of debris in increasingly congested low earth orbits and any potential technologies to remove debris.

Question 24. In your view, what are the tradeoffs and potential consequences of a proposal to migrate TraCSS from NOAA to a private operator?

Answer. Technologies in the commercial space sector are rapidly evolving changing the scope of tradeoffs. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on finding an optimum balance of capabilities.

Question 25. If confirmed, do you believe the Office of Space Commerce could benefit from additional appropriations, personnel, and resources? Yes or no?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to support the safety, sustainably, and continued growth of the U.S. commercial space sector, including via the Office of Space Commerce.

NOAA reviews and approves license applications for satellite operators who wish to carry out remote sensing activities to observe the Earth from space through authorities granted by Congress and carried out by the Commercial Remote Sensing Regulatory Affairs (CRSRA) division within NOAA's Office of Space Commerce. Part of CRSRA's review process ensures licensed remote sensing activities meet U.S. objectives and satisfy treaty obligations the U.S. committed to under the Outer Space Treaty.

For in-space activities, NOAA reviews applications for remote sensing licenses, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) reviews applications for spectrum frequencies, and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reviews applications for launch and reentry licenses. As innovation in space continues to rapidly advance, certain emerging in-space activities may not neatly fall under the regulatory purview of a single Federal agency with jurisdiction over in-space activities. This has reinvigorated a debate around whether "Mission Authorization" authorities should be granted to a Federal entity to promote U.S. leadership in space and maintain compliance under the Outer Space Treaty.

Question 26. Do you believe NOAA, through the Office of Space Commerce, is equipped and prepared to carry out "mission authorization" responsibilities, if provided by Congress? Yes or no?

Answer. The Office of Space Commerce is well-positioned to carry out mission authorization responsibilities. If confirmed, I look forward to working with you on this topic to increase business certainty, investment prospects, and eliminate inconsistencies.

Question 27. If NOAA, through the Office of Space Commerce, is granted Mission Authorization responsibilities, which emerging activities do you believe this licensing framework could apply to? Should those activities be specifically prescribed by Congress (e.g., operating a commercial space station, conducting active debris remediation, etc.), or should NOAA be granted the flexibility to define the scope of the licensing framework by a set of flexible criteria?

Answer. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and across the Administration on the scope of applicable activities.

Question 28. If NOAA, through the Office of Space Commerce, is granted Mission Authorization responsibilities, will you commit to transparency and close coordination during the review process with Federal agencies and private entities?

Answer. Yes.

Question 29. As with most licensing frameworks, review processes and predictable timelines are prescribed in statute and in regulation. Proposals have been introduced to create a "presumption of approval" within a Mission Authorization framework to allow a private entity to simply carry out an in-space activity under a Mission Authorization framework if the Federal government does not respond to, or approve, a license within a certain timeline. What perspectives or concerns would you have with a "presumption of approval" provision if it were considered by Congress as part of a Mission Authorization framework?

Answer. The “presumption of approval” with the Office of Space Commerce’s commercial remote sensing process has enabled NOAA to conduct regulatory reform and reduce permitting timelines consistent with President Trump’s Space Policy Directive 2. This will best promote U.S. competitiveness through an open and transparent regulatory framework with clearly defined regulatory responsibilities and timelines and is made possible by close engagement with the commercial space sector.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. JOHN FETTERMAN TO
NEIL JACOBS

Question 1. Dr. Jacobs, thank you for talking with me during the hearing about NOAA’s pending designation of parts of Lake Erie as a marine sanctuary. I appreciated your positive response during the hearing. Will you commit again to work with me and my office to expeditiously finalize Lake Erie’s designation as a national marine sanctuary if confirmed?

Answer. I appreciate your questions. Lake Erie is a special place. If confirmed, I will work with your office on Lake Erie when possible.

Question 2. I am concerned with the National Weather Service’s lack of meteorologists across the country, and most of all for the NWS office overseeing Lake Erie not having a meteorologist. If confirmed, you’ll have to hire a significant number of staff across the country. Will you prioritize filling the meteorologist position, and other crucial staff positions, to support safety in the Lake Erie region?

Answer. If confirmed, I will immediately begin working with the National Weather Service and NOAA Office of Human Capital Services to ensure we have adequate staffing to effectively carry out its core, life-saving mission and strategic priorities.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. MARIA CANTWELL TO
TAYLOR JORDAN

NOAA Organic Act and Weather Act. During Secretary Lutnick’s confirmation hearing in January, he testified that he did not support breaking up and dismantling NOAA. Unfortunately, that’s exactly what the Administration is doing via executive actions.

One way to ensure certainty about NOAA’s products and services that American families rely upon is to authorize NOAA in statute.

Question 1. Yes or No: Do you support a NOAA Organic Act? If no, why not?

Answer. Yes, an organic act, at a high level, would provide clarity to NOAA’s mission in statute. There is also value in not being overly prescriptive in an organic act to allow NOAA the flexibility to quickly evolve priorities and capabilities to improve its mission.

Question 2. How would having an Organic Act protect communities from these disasters?

Answer. NOAA’s mission is to understand and predict changes in weather, oceans, climate, and coasts, and to share that information with decision-makers. Authorizing NOAA’s mission would provide communities with continued critical information to protect against impacts from environmental phenomena.

Question 3. Yes or No: Do you support the Weather Act Reauthorization? If no, why not?

Answer. I support continuing to authorize NOAA’s public safety mission and ensuring weather research is transitioned to operations. I look forward to working with the Committee.

Tribal Consultation. With 29 tribes in the Northwest, we understand the importance of government-to-government consultation. However, sometimes agencies forget this and I hope you can help restore that process.

Question 1. Yes or No: Do you support Tribal government to government consultation?

Answer. Yes.

Question 2. Tribes are impacted by weather forecasts, sea level rise, and climate change. Do you agree that Tribes should be consulted on weather and resilience related programs, in addition to fisheries?

Answer. Yes.

Question 3. Will you ensure NOAA is adequately staffed so that Tribes are able to access meaningful government-to-government consultation and technical assistance on NOAA programs, including grants?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure NOAA is appropriately staffed to fulfill its mission.

Dismantling the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The Trump Administration is pursuing a FY 2026 budget proposal that would reduce NOAA's budget by 27 percent, eliminate Congressionally mandated programs, and transfer part of the National Marine Fisheries Service to the Interior Department.

During his confirmation hearing, Secretary Lutnick told me that he has, "no interest in separating" NOAA and that breaking up NOAA, "is not on my agenda." Yet, that is exactly what the Administration is trying to do.

Question 1. Do you support any function, mission, or congressionally authorized or appropriated work within NOAA, or executed by NOAA, being moved out of the NOAA or the Department of Commerce? If yes, please describe.

Answer. I am not at NOAA and not privy to any discussions related to NOAA programs or offices. If confirmed, I will ensure that NOAA's mission across line offices continues to execute with operational excellence regardless of potential organizational changes. I will prioritize improving NOAA's capabilities to provide benefit to the American taxpayer.

NOAA Workforce Reductions. I have serious concerns about the current state of NOAA's workforce. Since January 2025, NOAA has lost a combined 27,000 years of experience. The resulting brain drain has impacted the entire agency. Overall, NOAA now has more than 3,000 vacant positions across the agency.

On February 19, 2025, I sent a letter to Secretary Lutnick urging him to protect NOAA's critical workforce from the Trump Administration's reduction-in-force initiatives and hiring freeze, which would jeopardize the safety of the American public. Despite this warning, about 600 probationary employees were fired across various NOAA line offices, and over 1,000 employees have left through voluntary separation programs. These staffing shortages are disrupting NOAA's core functions. For instance, weather balloon launches have been suspended, and multiple Weather Forecast Offices no longer able to staff overnight shifts.

Question 1. Yes or No: Do you believe NOAA can operate at its peak effectiveness when it has over 3,000 positions vacant?

Answer. I am currently not at NOAA and can not speak to specific program operations and staffing at this time. If confirmed, I will work to ensure NOAA continues to deliver and provide critical environmental information. I am confident that NOAA's workforce remains dedicated to scientific excellence and mission success.

Question 2. Yes or No: Do you think that the agency's ability to carry out its mission effectively has been impacted by the loss of about 2,000 officials since January?

Answer. I am currently not at NOAA and can not speak to specific program operations and staffing at this time. As we have seen with recent National Weather Service forecasts during high-impact weather events, NOAA staff continue to provide life-saving information to decision-makers. I understand that NOAA has been granted exemption authority to staff the National Weather Service.

Question 3. What specific steps would you take to protect NOAA's workforce and ensure staff capacity to execute NOAA's core missions?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to support NOAA's mission and ensure that it is adequately staffed to carry out its mission.

Question 4. What specific steps would you take to ensure the National Weather Service has sufficient staff for all Weather Forecast Offices and to provide Americans with accurate and timely weather warnings?

Answer. I understand that NOAA has been granted authority to staff the National Weather Service. If confirmed, I will work with the National Weather Service and human capital services to ensure NOAA appropriately fills vacancies under the exceptions.

Question 5. Executive Order 14170 implements a Federal hiring freeze, but it allows for exclusions for positions related to public safety. The National Weather Service has been given a limited exemption to rehire 126 positions. Would you advocate for an exemption to the hiring freeze under for any other NOAA positions? If so, which positions?

Answer. I am currently not at NOAA and can not speak to specific program operations and personnel at this time. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure that NOAA is adequately staffed to meet its mission and will evaluate how best to fulfill our critical mission areas across all offices.

Question 6. What is your plan for rebuilding the base of expertise that has been lost, ensuring that our science remains cutting edge, and retaining experts that are otherwise likely to leave for work in other nations?

Answer. If confirmed, I will continue to support NOAA's mission of understanding and predicting changes in weather, oceans, climate, and coasts, and providing that information to decision-makers. I will ensure that NOAA remains a global leader in environmental science and delivers results for the American people by leveraging investments in modernization as well as talent development and retention efforts.

NOAA Budget. The FY 2026 Presidential Budget \$4.5B for NOAA, which would be a 27 percent decrease in funding from the enacted FY25 continuing resolution.

Question 1. Yes or No: Do you support the FY 2026 Presidential Budget for NOAA?

Answer. Yes. I support the President's budget request for NOAA.

Question 2. How would you maintain NOAA's leadership in ocean and atmospheric science under the proposed budget?

Answer. NOAA's FY26 Presidential Budget Request streamlines agency operations, prioritizes its public safety mission, and maintains NOAA's leadership in ocean and atmospheric sciences.

NOAA Research. The FY 2026 Presidential Budget proposes eliminating the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) as a line office. The budget would terminate all funding for NOAA's Research Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes, Regional Climate Data and Information, Climate Competitive Research, National Sea Grant College Program, and the National Oceanographic Partnership Program.

Question 1. Yes or no, do you support eliminating OAR? If yes, explain why.

Answer. I support the President's budget request for NOAA. The budget request streamlines agency operations and prioritizes its public safety mission, while providing for efficiencies within NOAA research by more closely aligning operational and research components to foster collaboration and drive innovation. This realignment will strengthen delivery of actionable science to NOAA's operational end-users and remain responsive to the needs of the public.

Question 2. Do you believe NOAA/NWS forecasts improvements will flatline or degrade if this critical research is eliminated?

Answer. No.

Question 3. How do you define climate?

Answer. As defined for environmental phenomena in the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017, "seasonal" is defined as the time range between 3 months and 2 years, and "subseasonal" is defined as the time range between 2 weeks and 3 months. Discussions also indicated "weather" as the time between 0 days and 2 weeks, and "climate" as the time range beyond 2 years. I continue to believe these definitions are appropriate for patterns and trends in environmental phenomena.

Question 4. What do you believe is NOAA's role in climate research?

Answer. NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in weather, oceans, climate, and coasts, and to provide this information. NOAA accomplishes this goal for climate research through long-term observations, modelling, and analysis.

Question 5. Do you support fully funding NOAA's Cooperative Institutes?

Answer. I support the President's budget request to streamline agency operations, prioritize its public safety mission, and find efficiencies.

Question 6. Do you support fully funding the NOAA Research Laboratories?

Answer. I support the President's budget request to streamline agency operations, prioritize its public safety mission, and find efficiencies.

Question 7. The National Severe Storm Laboratory's experimental Warn-on-Forecast System is working to improve lead times for tornado and severe weather warnings. Do you support continuing the Warn-on-Forecast System and similar weather research efforts?

Answer. While I am not currently at NOAA and do not have specific program visibility, I will continue to support high priority weather research programs. As NOAA operational end-users identify successful research to improve the mission of public safety, I support transitioning research programs into operations to keep Americans out of harm's way.

Question 8. How will you ensure the safety of the American public if OAR programs that aim to prepare communities to face extreme weather events are dismantled?

Answer. I will continue to support NOAA's mission of providing environmental data and ensuring that NOAA is adequately staffed to meet this mission. My understanding is that programs that support community preparedness for extreme weather are being realigned to ensure they support operational end-users.

Climate Adaptation Partnerships. There are 13 NOAA Climate Adaptation Partnership teams around the country. And yet, the grant to only one, the Northwest Climate Resilience Collaborative (NCRC) based at the University of Washington, remains terminated by the Administration.

The NCRC team addresses unique needs of the region, including those related to extreme heat that led to more than 400 deaths in Washington due to the "heat dome" that descended on the region during the summer of 2021. NCRC also helps vulnerable populations to mitigate against the negative health effects of wildfire smoke and extreme heat.

Question 1. Could you provide us with the rationale for why this grant is the only one that remains terminated?

Answer. I am not currently at NOAA and do not have visibility into specific programs or grant terminations.

Question 2. Another team has had its grant restored. What steps can the NCRC take to have its grant restored?

Answer. I am not currently at NOAA and do not have visibility into specific programs or grant terminations.

Scientific Integrity. NOAA defines scientific integrity as "the adherence to professional practices, ethical behavior, and the principles of honesty and objectivity when conducting, managing, using the results of, and communicating about science and scientific activities. Inclusivity, transparency, and protection from inappropriate influence are hallmarks of scientific integrity."

Question 1. Do you commit to uphold and abide by NOAA's scientific integrity policy if confirmed?

Answer. I am committed to promoting scientific integrity at NOAA.

Question 2. What specific lessons have you learned about the importance of abiding by NOAA's scientific integrity policies from your experience at NOAA during the first Trump Administration?

Answer. From my previous experience at the agency, NOAA scientists and forecasters develop expert environmental information and communicate this information to decision-makers, including at the local level. Their relationships with local officials and emergency managers provide critical linkages to ensure the public receives NOAA's information in a timely and accurate manner.

Question 3. What specific steps will you take to ensure that NOAA's forecasts cannot be compromised and career scientists are empowered to publish and communicate their findings without political interference in the future?

Answer. I have and will continue to rely on NOAA's workforce to provide environmental information and will let science drive decision-making.

Contract Review. Currently, all NOAA contracts and grants greater than \$100k require Secretary Lutnick's personal approval. There are thousands of contracts and grants that meet that threshold. As you can imagine, this has resulted in a significant bottleneck, causing critical contracts to terminate, lapse, or be signed mere hours before they expire.

Question 1. Do you support this practice?

Answer. I support Secretary Lutnick conducting thorough reviews of Department of Commerce contracts.

Question 2. What will you do to ensure NOAA contracts are reviewed in a timely and efficient manner without inadvertent lapses?

Answer. I will work closely with NOAA and the Department of Commerce to assist in timely review of contracts.

Question 3. Will you commit to alerting Congress of the lapse or cancellation of any monetarily or operationally significant contracts in a timely manner?

Answer. I will work through the appropriate Congressional Affairs office and the Department of Commerce to ensure information is transmitted in a timely manner.

NOAA Authorizing Legislation. NOAA currently lacks an overarching law authorizing the agency's missions and operations.

Question 1. Do you support a NOAA Organic Act?

Answer. Yes, an organic act, at a high level, would provide clarity to NOAA's mission in statute. There is also value in not being overly prescriptive in an organic

act to allow NOAA the flexibility to quickly evolve priorities and capabilities to improve its mission.

Question 2. Do you support the Weather Act Reauthorization?

Answer. I support continuing to authorize NOAA's public safety mission and ensuring weather research is transitioned to operations. I look forward to working with the Committee.

Geostationary Extended Observations (GeoXO) Satellite System. As the GOES-R satellites end their operational lifetime, the GeoXO satellites will replace them. Currently NOAA plans to launch six satellites with instruments including a lightning mapper (LMX), Sounder (GXS), Atmospheric Composition (ACX), Imager (GXI), and Ocean Color (OCX). The GeoXO Sounder will improve regional forecast accuracy by 40 percent and is tailored to improve forecasts of rapidly changing convective events like the severe storms that caused catastrophic flooding in Texas.

Question 1. Do you support NOAA's current plan for six satellites?

Answer. I am not currently at NOAA and do not know the status of current instrument contracts and their life-cycle procurement and management. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing NOAA's plan for the GeoXO constellation.

Question 2. What can NOAA do to maintain the launch timeline and avoid a gap in coverage?

Answer. To maintain launch timelines and avoid data gaps, NOAA should ensure it works with its Federal partners and stakeholders on procurement schedules, system integration, and constellation management. NOAA should also, where appropriate and feasible, consider partnerships with other Federal agencies and the private sector for unique orbits and data that support public safety and operational readiness.

Question 3. The plan laid out for the GeoXO program during the first Trump Administration also included economically beneficial ocean color, atmospheric composition, and lightning mapper observations. These instruments help us monitor air quality impacts from pollution and smoke, predict the intensity of hurricanes and respond to wildfires, and track ocean pollution, water quality, and hazards like harmful algal blooms that can impact fisheries and water supplies. Do you still support including instruments for these observations on GeoXO satellites?

Answer. I am not currently at NOAA and do not know the status of current instrument contracts and their life-cycle procurement and management. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing NOAA's plan for the GeoXO constellation. I will continue to support and assist in managing NOAA's observing networks that improve NOAA's mission and support public safety.

Question 4. Do you support cancelling existing contracts that would incur large penalties?

Answer. I am not currently at NOAA and do not have insight into individual instrument contracting terms, processes, or schedule. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Secretary Lutnick and the NOAA Administrator in the review of contracts.

Extreme Weather. According to NOAA, since 1980 we've had an average of nine extreme weather events annually that cost over \$1 billion each. However, in the last five years, that has spiked to 23 events per year, and last year it was 27 events. Climate change is driving more intense hurricanes, more frequent severe atmospheric rivers, rain events, and is doubling the number of wildfires. NOAA plays a principal role in ensuring the American public is informed and prepared to respond to extreme weather events.

Question 1. As extreme weather events across the country become more frequent, what do you believe is NOAA's role in coordinating resilience and response efforts?

Answer. NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in weather, oceans, climate, and coasts, and to provide this information. NOAA provides data, tools, and forecasting to Federal partners and the public.

Question 2. How will you improve NOAA's cooperation with local emergency managers during extreme weather events?

Answer. In supporting NOAA's mission to provide environmental information to decision-makers, I will ensure that the National Weather Service continues to embed with local emergency managers to convey timely and accurate environmental information.

Question 3. NOAA/NWS radars are nearing end of life. What plan would you enact as NOAA Administrator to ensure these crucial instruments are upgraded and replaced with little to no interruption of data?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure NOAA radar systems continue to meet mission requirements and that advanced planning is underway to eventually replace these systems in the future using the best available science and innovation.

Commercial Data and Services. Project 2025 proposes that “NWS should fully commercialize its forecasting operations” and encourages increased use of private sector data and services. As a government agency funded by taxpayer money, NOAA is a trusted source of free, reliable data.

Question 1. What do you see as NOAA’s core government functions that cannot be privatized or commercialized, especially at NWS and NESDIS?

Answer. NOAA’s public safety mission and its weather forecasting are core government functions that Americans across the country rely on every day. NOAA has historically utilized data and expertise from non-government sources to help it create and improve its own numerical weather prediction and modelling, this is most evident in NWS and NESDIS in programs such as the Mesonet Program and NESDIS’ acquisition of satellites, as well as commercial data programs. NOAA relies heavily on non-governmental partners to help build its observing networks and infrastructure. The products and services derived from these observing systems and infrastructure are the core government functions that are provided to every American every day.

Question 2. How will you ensure that NOAA avoids “vendor lock” when incorporating more commercial data and services?

Answer. NOAA takes commercial marketplace offerings into consideration when reviewing potential new sources of data. Increased use of industry engagement, such as industry days, general requests for information, and advanced planning can help ensure NOAA has an adequate understanding of commercial capabilities, and where these capabilities align NOAA mission needs.

Question 3. Currently, NOAA data is openly available to the public, but if NOAA buys data from private companies using taxpayer money, how will you ensure data will be made publicly available?

Answer. NOAA’s products and services are made available to the public. NOAA has historically acquired data from non-traditional or non-governmental partners, often with open redistribution licenses. There have been instances of small redistribution restrictions, however NOAA and government end-users, as well as researchers, have access to these datasets.

Question 4. Do you agree that NOAA satellites and associated ground and data systems are core public infrastructure and a national security asset?

Answer. NOAA’s current and planned satellites and ground systems in use are taxpayer funded public infrastructure and national security assets.

NWS Tornado Forecasting Warning Services. A DOC Inspector General Audit was published on July 8, 2025, evaluating NOAA and NWS’s tornado forecasting and warning services.

Question 1. Do you commit to implementing the recommendations made by the DOC IG audit?

Answer. I will work with NOAA staff to find a path forward that meets the intended outcome of this recommendation and protects lives and property.

Climate Change.

Question 1. Yes or No: Do you agree with the scientific consensus that human activity is the primary cause of climate change?

Answer. NOAA’s mission is to understand and predict changes in weather, oceans, climate, and coasts. NOAA will continue to accomplish this goal through long-term observations, cutting-edge modeling, and scientific analysis.

Question 2. Yes or No: Do you agree with the scientific consensus that climate change is driving more intense and more frequent severe weather events?

Answer. Scientific consensus, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s latest Assessment Report, for intense and frequent severe weather events is not uniform across each type and phenomena, with some phenomena such as tropical cyclones, tornadoes, hail, and floods receiving low confidence in observed trends, and others like extratropical storms and extreme winds receiving medium confidence. NOAA will continue to work to understand and predict changes in the weather, oceans, climate, and coasts.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH TO
TAYLOR JORDAN

Question 1. Can you commit to fully recusing yourself from any NOAA policy or procurement decisions involving your former clients, including Spire Global, AccuWeather and Lynker?

Answer. I have worked with the career staff of the Office of Government Ethics to ensure that I am complying with applicable laws and conflicts of interest. I will continue to follow the law and work with the Office of Government Ethics, Department of Commerce lawyers, and NOAA lawyers to ensure I remain compliant with all laws.

Question 2. What is your view on the role of the Federal Government in providing core weather and climate services, and how will you protect NOAA's public-service mission from undue commercial influence?

Answer. I support NOAA's mission to understand and predict changes in weather, oceans, climate, and coasts, and to provide that information to decision-makers. I will ensure that NOAA continues to provide its public-safety mission to the public.

Question 3. Please answer with "yes" or "no". Was President Biden certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election because President Biden received more votes than President Trump in the 2020 presidential election?

Answer. Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

Question 4. Please answer with "yes" or "no". Did President Trump lose the 2020 presidential election?

Answer. Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

Question 5. Please answer with "yes" or "no". Did President Trump lose the popular vote in the 2020 presidential election?

Answer. Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

Question 6. Please answer with "yes" or "no". Did President Trump lose the electoral college in the 2020 presidential election?

Answer. Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

Question 7. If you were unable or unwilling to provide a "yes" or "no" answer to any of the prior questions, please provide a detailed explanation justifying your refusal to provide such a clear and simple answer, including whether your refusal to provide a simple "yes" or "no" answer indicates that you believe President Trump received more votes than President Biden in the 2020 presidential election.

Answer. See my responses to questions 1–4 above.

The 14th Amendment states. "*No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.*"

Question 1. Where were you on January 6, 2021?

Answer. I was at my home in Washington, DC.

Question 2. Do you believe the events at the Capitol on January 6, 2021, were an insurrection, a rebellion against the Constitution of the United States, or both—and if you do not believe the events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol on that date comprised an insurrection or rebellion against the Constitution, please provide a detailed explanation explaining your belief.

Answer. This question is outside of the scope of my nomination to be an Assistant Secretary within the Department of Commerce.

Question 3. Why did you choose to resign, or choose not to resign, as a NOAA Senior Policy Advisor on January 6, 2021, or in the following days?

Answer. Prior to January 6, 2021, I had left government employment to seek other career opportunities.

Question 4. Do you support President Trump's decision to "grant a full, complete and unconditional pardon to all other individuals convicted of offenses related to events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021"?

Answer. This question is outside of the scope of my nomination to be an Assistant Secretary within the Department of Commerce. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the President and this Committee.

Question 5. Do you believe President Trump’s decision to “grant a full, complete and unconditional pardon to all other individuals convicted of offenses related to events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021” is consistent with supporting law enforcement?

Answer. The pardon power belongs to the President. I have always rejected violence against law enforcement.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTION SUBMITTED BY HON. JOHN FETTERMAN TO
TAYLOR JORDAN

Question. Mr. Jordan, you will also work in NOAA operations. Will you commit to work with me and my office to *expeditiously* finalize Lake Erie’s designation as a national marine sanctuary in your role with NOAA if confirmed?

Answer. While the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction does not directly work on national marine sanctuary issues, I understand this issue is important to you and will work with the NOAA Administrator and staff to be responsive to your request.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTION SUBMITTED BY HON. DAN SULLIVAN TO
HARRY KUMAR

On January 17, 2025, the National Telecommunications and Information Administration’s announcement of over \$113 million in Federal broadband grants from the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP). These awards are part of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act, and aim to equip Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Native American entities with the resources needed to bolster high-speed Internet deployment, workforce development, telehealth, and other programs across the country. Please provide a status update on the following awards:

- Old Harbor Native Corporation: \$64.7 million to deliver fiber optic connectivity to the communities of Old Harbor and Akhiok in rural Alaska. These areas have long struggled with access to reliable and affordable high-speed internet—a gap that continues to widen the digital divide and hinder access to education, healthcare, economic opportunity, and emergency response systems.
- Kawerak, Inc.: \$48.5 million to deliver fiber optic connectivity to St. Lawrence Island from Nome for the communities of Savoonga and Gambell. For decades, these communities have faced significant barriers due to inadequate communication infrastructure, which has hindered education, healthcare, economic development, and emergency response systems.

Answer. On January 16, 2025, NTIA announced the recommendation of both awards for approval under the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program (TBCP) Notice of Funding 2. Upon the change of Administration, the Department conducted a comprehensive and thorough review of all grant programs, including TBCP. The awards are now pending final review and clearance by Department of Commerce leadership.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. MARIA CANTWELL TO
HARRY KUMAR

Department of Commerce Responsiveness to Member and Committee Requests. Mr. Kumar, I am deeply frustrated by the Department’s lack of responses to letters and other oversight requests my colleagues and I have sent this year. This includes a series of letters we have sent to various officials at the Department seeking information about the Minority Business Development Agency, which the Administration has tried to illegally dismantle.

I’m looking for clear commitments to assure me this is going to change if you are confirmed.

Question 1. Yes or No: Do you agree to provide fulsome and meaningful responses to all the letters my colleagues and I have sent the Department this year regarding MBDA?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues at the Department to provide fulsome and meaningful responses to Congressional inquiries. With respect to

MBDA, my understanding is that there is broad, active ongoing litigation that has limited the Department's ability to provide more detailed responses.

Question 2. Yes or No: Do you agree it is unacceptable to ignore letters and requests from Democratic Members on this Committee?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues at the Department to provide timely responses to members of this committee.

Question 3. Yes or No: Do you believe the mere existence of litigation regarding a bureau or issue in the Department is adequate grounds to refuse to answer any questions from Congress regarding that bureau or issue? If yes, explain your position in full.

Answer. I believe that communication with Congress and this committee is a key function of the position. Thus, if confirmed, I will make sure that I consult with our Office of General Counsel on what is permissible to be shared when litigation is ongoing.

Question 4. Yes or No: Will you ensure that any accommodation the Department makes for majority staff, such as briefings or document productions, is likewise made available to minority staff?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure all committee staff are provided relevant information in a timely manner.

Question 5. Yes or No: Will you ensure the Department meaningfully responds to routine requests for briefings and technical assistance from my staff?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure timely responses are a top priority, including for briefings and technical assistance.

CHIPS and Science Act and Tech Hubs. There are several Department of Commerce programs established by the bipartisan CHIPS and Science Act that are essential for rebuilding U.S. leadership in technology, strengthening economic and national security, and supporting regional workforce and supply chains. These include CHIPS manufacturing incentives, CHIPS R&D initiatives, and Economic Development Administration regional technology and innovation hubs or "Tech Hubs."

Based on the elimination of the EDA in the proposed budget and the Department's decision in May to rescind \$210 million in funding for six Tech Hubs, I have serious concerns about the Administration's commitment to these programs and to U.S. innovation leadership. This decision has introduced significant uncertainty and is halting the progress that Tech Hubs were making toward advancing innovation, workforce development, and economic growth in their respective regions. Greater transparency and regular communication with Congress are essential to restoring confidence in the CHIPS and Science implementation process.

Question 1. Yes or No: Do you commit to providing Congress with timely updates and early notification regarding decisions related to Tech Hubs, and to coordinating with Congress on plans and policies to maintain our technology and manufacturing competitiveness?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with the relevant Department personnel to ensure the Department provides timely updates related to Tech Hubs and will work with Congress to ensure the U.S. remains the global leader in technological and manufacturing competitiveness.

Question 2. Yes or No: If the "Investment Accelerator" announced by Executive Order is expected to become a key focus of managing CHIPS and Science implementation, will you also commit to offering bipartisan briefings to this Committee on progress in establishing the office and its roles and responsibilities before making a public announcement?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure bipartisan briefings are offered on CHIPS and Science Act implementation and the Investment Accelerator Office.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTION SUBMITTED BY HON. AMY KLOBUCHAR TO
HARRY KUMAR

The National Rural Export Center in Fargo, North Dakota assists rural small businesses with accessing international markets. By offering advanced data analytics, market navigation tools, and risk mitigation strategies, it helps level the playing field for small businesses to better compete globally.

If confirmed, will you commit to working with me and my staff to support the Rural Export Center to help rural businesses succeed in international markets?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with you and your staff to ensure rural and small businesses are able to continue to succeed in international markets.

RESPONSE TO WRITTEN QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY HON. TAMMY DUCKWORTH TO
HARRY KUMAR

The Department of Commerce's Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program is a crucial program to help strengthen the U.S. industrial base by providing a number of services to small and medium-sized manufacturers. There is one center in each state and in Illinois, the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center (IMEC) leads a variety of initiatives to grow manufacturing, including supporting the development of quantum technologies in our State. IMEC has created and retained more than 7,000 jobs and assisted nearly 3,000 companies.

Question 1. Mr. Kumar, are you aware that there is bipartisan support for the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program?

Answer. Yes.

Question 2. Mr. Kumar, do you commit to notifying Congress about any planned changes or adjustments to the Manufacturing Extension Partnership Program?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to providing timely updates to the Committee.

As the main conduit between Congress and the Department of Commerce, it is crucial that you take seriously your responsibility to communicate with Members of Congress, particularly members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation.

Question 1. Mr. Kumar, do you commit to responding in a timely matter with substantive information relevant to a given issue, when I send you an official letter requesting a response?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to responding in a timely manner when sent an official letter with the appropriate level of detail.

Question 2. Mr. Kumar, do you commit to making yourself and your team available to Congressional staff via phone and e-mail when we make inquiries of the Department, regardless of political affiliation?

Answer. If confirmed, I will make myself and the legislative affairs team available to congressional staff regardless of political affiliation.

Question 3. Mr. Kumar, who will be the point person from your team that my office should reach out to for any inquiries? How many members of your team will be dedicated to working with Senate staff?

Answer. If confirmed, your team can reach out to myself or Will Turner, the current Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs. The entire legislative affairs team will devote themselves to working with both chambers.

Question 4. Mr. Kumar, will you commit to supplying responsive data and documents when Congressional staff make requests to the Department?

Answer. If confirmed, I commit to working with my colleagues in the Department to provide the appropriate responsive data and documents.

Question 1. Please answer with "yes" or "no". Was President Biden certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election because President Biden received more votes than President Trump in the 2020 presidential election?

Answer. Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

Question 2. Please answer with "yes" or "no". Did President Trump lose the 2020 presidential election?

Answer. Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

Question 3. Please answer with "yes" or "no". Did President Trump lose the popular vote in the 2020 presidential election?

Answer. Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

Question 4. Please answer with "yes" or "no". Did President Trump lose the electoral college in the 2020 presidential election?

Answer. Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

Question 5. If you were unable or unwilling to provide a "yes" or "no" answer to any of the prior questions, please provide a detailed explanation justifying your refusal to provide such a clear and simple answer, including whether your refusal to provide a simple "yes" or "no" answer indicates that you believe President Trump received more votes than President Biden in the 2020 presidential election.

Answer. See my responses to questions 1-4 above.

The 14th Amendment states. *"No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or mili-*

tary, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.”

Question 1. Where were you on January 6, 2021?

Answer. I was in my apartment and was in no way involved with the events at the Capitol on January 6, 2021.

Question 2. Do you believe the events at the Capitol on January 6, 2021, were an insurrection, a rebellion against the Constitution of the United States, or both—and if you do not believe the events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol on that date comprised an insurrection or rebellion against the Constitution, please provide a detailed explanation explaining your belief.

Answer. This question is outside of the scope of my nomination to be an Assistant Secretary within the Department of Commerce.

Question 3. Why did you choose to resign, or choose not to resign, from the White House on January 6, 2021, or in the following days?

Answer. I was not—and have never been—a White House employee. I did not resign on January 6, 2021 because I was committed to fulfilling my term with the Department of Commerce.

Question 4. Do you support President Trump’s decision to “grant a full, complete and unconditional pardon to all other individuals convicted of offenses related to events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021”?

Answer. This question is outside of the scope of my nomination to be an Assistant Secretary within the Department of Commerce. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the President and this Committee.

Question 5. Do you believe President Trump’s decision to “grant a full, complete and unconditional pardon to all other individuals convicted of offenses related to events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021” is consistent with supporting law enforcement?

Answer. The pardon power belongs to the President, but I have always rejected violence against law enforcement.