

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2407

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

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 14, 2009

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

A BILL

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

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “National Climate Serv-
5 ice Act of 2009”.

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

7 The purpose of this Act is to establish a National
8 Climate Service within the National Oceanic and Atmos-
9 pheric Administration to—

1 (1) advance understanding of climate variability
2 and change at the global, national, and regional lev-
3 els;

4 (2) provide forecasts, warnings, and other infor-
5 mation to the public on variability and change in
6 weather and climate that affect geographic areas,
7 natural resources, infrastructure, economic sectors,
8 and communities; and

9 (3) support development of adaptation and re-
10 sponse plans by Federal agencies, State, local, and
11 tribal governments, the private sector, and the pub-
12 lic.

13 **SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.**

14 In this Act:

15 (1) **ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**—The term “Advi-
16 sory Committee” means the Climate Service Advi-
17 sory Committee established under section 5.

18 (2) **DIRECTOR.**—The term “Director” means
19 the Director of the Climate Service Office.

20 (3) **REPRESENTATIVE.**—The term “representa-
21 tive” means an individual who is not a full-time or
22 part-time employee of the Federal Government and
23 who is appointed to an advisory committee to rep-
24 resent the views of an entity or entities outside the
25 Federal Government.

1 (4) SPECIAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE.—The
2 term “Special Government Employee” has the same
3 meaning as in section 202(a) of title 18, United
4 States Code.

5 (5) UNDER SECRETARY.—The term “Under
6 Secretary” means the Under Secretary of Commerce
7 for Oceans and Atmosphere.

8 **SEC. 4. NATIONAL CLIMATE SERVICE.**

9 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary, building
10 upon the resources of the National Weather Service and
11 other weather and climate programs in the National Oce-
12 anic and Atmospheric Administration, shall establish the
13 National Climate Service.

14 (b) CLIMATE SERVICE OFFICE.—The Under Sec-
15 retary shall establish a Climate Service Office. The Cli-
16 mate Service Office shall—

17 (1) coordinate programs at the National Oce-
18 anic and Atmospheric Administration to ensure the
19 timely production and distribution of data and infor-
20 mation on national, regional, and local climate varia-
21 bility and change over all time scales relevant for
22 planning and response, including intraseasonal,
23 interannual, decadal, and multidecadal time periods;

24 (2) ensure exchange of information between the
25 research and operational offices at the National Oce-

1 anic and Atmospheric Administration to identify re-
2 search needs for improving climate services and en-
3 sure the timely and orderly transition of research
4 findings, improved technologies, models, and other
5 tools to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Ad-
6 ministration's operations;

7 (3) ensure operational quality control of all Na-
8 tional Climate Service products including a trans-
9 parent and open accounting of all the assumptions
10 built into the global, national, regional, and local
11 weather and climate computer models upon which
12 such climate services and products are based;

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

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

20 (A) ensure the timely dissemination of in-
21 formation on weather and climate produced by
22 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin-
23 istration to other Federal agencies;

24 (B) ensure that data and information col-
25 lected by other Federal agencies relevant to im-

1 proving climate services are made available to
2 the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Admin-
3 istration;

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

6 (D) obtain information from other Federal
7 agencies to improve the development and dis-
8 semination by the National Oceanic and Atmos-
9 pheric Administration of information on climate
10 and weather to other Federal agencies for the
11 development of climate service products by
12 those agencies;

13 (6) ensure cooperation and collaboration, as ap-
14 propriate, of the National Climate Service with
15 State, local, and tribal governments, academic and
16 nonprofit research organizations, and private sector
17 entities, including weather information providers and
18 other stakeholders; and

19 (7) ensure exchange of data, information, and
20 research with the United States Global Change Re-
21 search Program to support the development of as-
22 sessments required under the Global Change Re-
23 search Act of 1990 (15 U.S.C. 2921 et seq.).

24 (c) NATIONAL CLIMATE SERVICE.—

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

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

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

(B) facilitate collection and exchange of data and information between the States and Federal Government on weather and climate in conjunction with the National Climatic Data Center;

(C) support research and observations;

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

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

6 (3) REGIONAL INTEGRATED SCIENCES AND AS-
7 SESSMENTS PROGRAM.—The Under Secretary shall
8 maintain a network of offices as part of the Regional
9 Integrated Sciences and Assessments Program. Such
10 offices shall engage in cooperative research, develop-
11 ment, and demonstration projects with the academic
12 community on climate products, technologies, mod-
13 els, and other tools to improve understanding and
14 forecasting of regional and local climate variability
15 and change and the effects on economic activities,
16 natural resources, and water availability, and other
17 effects on communities, to facilitate development of
18 regional and local adaptation plans to respond to cli-
19 mate variability and change, and any other needed
20 research identified by the Under Secretary or the
21 Advisory Committee.

22 (4) OTHER OFFICES.—In carrying out the func-
23 tions of the National Climate Service, the Under
24 Secretary shall utilize the assets and expertise of—

25 (A) the National Weather Service to—

1 (i) deliver operational weather and cli-
2 mate forecasts, warnings, products, and in-
3 formation through the National Climate
4 Services Division, Local Weather Forecast
5 Offices, Weather Service Offices, and River
6 Forecast Centers; and

7 (ii) develop climate forecast models
8 and tools through the National Centers for
9 Environmental Prediction;

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

15 (C) the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric
16 Research to—

17 (i) provide research on product devel-
18 opment;

19 (ii) improve weather and climate fore-
20 cast models;

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

23 (iv) oversee the National Oceanic and
24 Atmospheric Administration supported re-
25 search performed by the Joint Cooperative

1 Institutes, universities, and other non-Fed-
2 eral entities;

3 (D) the National Integrated Drought In-
4 formation System to—

5 (i) provide an effective drought warn-
6 ing system;

7 (ii) coordinate and integrate Federal
8 research on droughts;

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

11 (iv) make usable, reliable, and timely
12 forecasts and assessments of drought, in-
13 cluding assessments of the severity of
14 drought conditions and impacts; and

15 (v) communicate drought forecasts,
16 conditions, and impacts to Federal, re-
17 gional, State, tribal, and local govern-
18 ments, the private sector, and the public;
19 and

20 (E) any other National Oceanic and At-
21 mospheric Administration offices or programs,
22 as appropriate.

23 (5) SERVICE ELEMENTS.—The National Cli-
24 mate Service shall—

1 (A) conduct analyses of and studies relat-
2 ing to the effects of weather and climate on
3 communities, including effects on agricultural
4 production, natural resources, energy supply
5 and demand, recreation, and other sectors of
6 the economy;

7 (B) carry out observations, data collection,
8 and monitoring of atmospheric and oceanic con-
9 ditions on a statewide, regional, national, and
10 global basis;

11 (C) provide information and technical sup-
12 port for Federal, regional, State, tribal, and
13 local government efforts to assess and respond
14 to climate variability and change;

15 (D) develop systems for the management
16 and dissemination of data, information, and as-
17 sessments, including mechanisms for consulta-
18 tion with current and potential users; and

19 (E) conduct research to improve fore-
20 casting, characterization, and understanding of
21 weather and climate variability and change and
22 its effects on communities, including its effects
23 on agricultural production, natural resources,
24 energy supply and demand, recreation, and
25 other sectors of the economy.

1 **SEC. 5. CLIMATE SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall estab-
3 lish a Climate Service Advisory Committee to provide ad-
4 vice on—

5 (1) climate service product development;

6 (2) delivery of services to decisionmakers and
7 other stakeholders;

8 (3) infrastructure to support observations and
9 monitoring;

10 (4) computation and modeling needs, research
11 needs, and other resources needed to develop, dis-
12 tribute, and ensure the utility of climate data, prod-
13 ucts, and services; and

14 (5) any other topics as may be requested by the
15 Under Secretary or Congress.

16 (b) MEMBERS.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Advisory Committee
18 shall be composed of at least 25 members appointed
19 by the Under Secretary. Each member of the Advi-
20 sory Committee shall be qualified either—

21 (A) by education, training, and experience
22 to evaluate scientific and technical information
23 on matters referred to the Advisory Committee
24 under this section; or

1 (B) to evaluate the utility and need for cli-
2 mate products by planners, decisionmakers, the
3 private sector, and the public.

4 (2) TERMS OF SERVICE.—Members shall be ap-
5 pointed for 3-year terms, renewable once, and shall
6 serve at the discretion of the Under Secretary. Va-
7 cancy appointments shall be for the remainder of the
8 unexpired term of the vacancy, and an individual so
9 appointed may subsequently be appointed for 2 full
10 3-year terms if the remainder of the unexpired term
11 is less than one year.

12 (3) CHAIRPERSON.—The Under Secretary shall
13 designate a chairperson from among the members of
14 the Advisory Committee. The designated Chair-
15 person shall alternate between a member who is ap-
16 pointed as a representative and a member who is ap-
17 pointed as a Special Government Employee.

18 (4) SUBCOMMITTEES.—

19 (A) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Advisory
20 Committee shall establish—

21 (i) a Subcommittee on Science and
22 Technology to advise the National Climate
23 Service on needed research, technology de-
24 velopment, and additional observations,

1 and on any other scientific or technical
2 issues as appropriate; and

3 (ii) a Subcommittee on Product De-
4 velopment and Delivery composed pri-
5 marily of representatives of the community
6 of potential users of the products devel-
7 oped and delivered by the National Climate
8 Service.

9 The Advisory Committee may establish such ad-
10 ditional subcommittees of its members as may
11 be necessary.

12 (B) APPOINTMENT.—

13 (i) FULL ADVISORY COMMITTEE.—At
14 least 50 percent of the members of the Ad-
15 visory Committee shall be appointed as
16 Special Government Employees.

17 (ii) SUBCOMMITTEES.—At least 75
18 percent of the members of the Sub-
19 committee on Science and Technology shall
20 be appointed as Special Government Em-
21 ployees. Not more than 25 percent of the
22 members of the Subcommittee on Product
23 Development and Delivery shall be ap-
24 pointed as Special Government Employees.

25 (c) ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.—

1 (1) REPORTING.—The Advisory Committee
2 shall report to the Under Secretary and the appro-
3 priate requesting party.

4 (2) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—The Under
5 Secretary shall provide administrative support to the
6 Advisory Committee.

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

10 (4) COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES.—A mem-
11 ber of the Advisory Committee shall not be com-
12 pensated for service on the Advisory Committee, but
13 may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem
14 in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with subchapter
15 I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States Code.

16 (d) EXPIRATION.—Section 14 of the Federal Advi-
17 sory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to
18 the Climate Service Advisory Committee.

19 **SEC. 6. REPEAL.**

20 The National Climate Program Act (15 U.S.C. 2901
21 et seq.) is repealed.

22 **SEC. 7. ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL INTEGRATED**
23 **SCIENCES AND ASSESSMENTS TEAMS.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall estab-
25 lish Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments

1 (RISA) Teams through a competitive, peer-reviewed selec-
2 tion process. Teams shall conduct applied regional climate
3 research and projects to address the needs of local and
4 regional decisionmakers for information and tools to de-
5 velop adaptation and response plans to climate variability
6 and change. The awards shall be administered through a
7 cooperative agreement between the National Oceanic and
8 Atmospheric Administration and the RISA Team. Each
9 award shall be for a period of five years for an amount
10 up to \$300,000 per year.

11 (b) RISA TEAMS.—Teams shall be composed of
12 multi-institutional partnerships whose individual members
13 may include—

14 (1) institutions of higher education, as defined
15 in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of
16 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a));

17 (2) minority serving institutions, as defined in
18 section 371(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965;
19 and

20 (3) nongovernmental organizations, Federal
21 agencies, State and local agencies, tribal organiza-
22 tions, and for-profit entities.

23 (c) CONSIDERATIONS.—In making awards under this
24 section, the Under Secretary shall consider—

1 (1) the overall geographic distribution of RISA
2 Teams and existing gaps in applied research to sup-
3 port local and regional decisionmakers;

4 (2) the team’s ability to contribute to the Na-
5 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s ef-
6 forts to deliver climate services in the region; and

7 (3) the team’s proposal to integrate social and
8 physical sciences research to address the effects of
9 climate variability and change on the ecological, eco-
10 nomic, and social systems in the region.

11 **SEC. 8. SURVEY OF NEED FOR CLIMATE SERVICES.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall pro-
13 vide a report to Congress within 6 months after the date
14 of enactment of this Act that compiles information on the
15 current climate products being delivered by the National
16 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and its partner
17 organizations to users and stakeholders and on the needs
18 of users and stakeholders for new climate products and
19 services.

20 (b) CONTENTS OF REPORT.—The report shall iden-
21 tify—

22 (1) specific user groups and stakeholders that
23 currently are served by the National Oceanic and
24 Atmospheric Administration and its partner organi-
25 zations;

1 (2) the type of climate products and services
2 currently delivered to specific user groups and stake-
3 holders and the specific National Oceanic and At-
4 mospheric Administration office or partner organiza-
5 tion that delivers these products and services;

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

9 (4) specific needs for new climate products and
10 services identified by user groups and stakeholders.

11 (c) CONSULTATION.—The Under Secretary shall con-
12 sult with the Climate Service Advisory Committee in the
13 preparation of this report.

14 **SEC. 9. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.**

15 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall pre-
16 pare a plan for creating a National Climate Service in the
17 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and de-
18 livering climate products and services to the National Oce-
19 anic and Atmospheric Administration users and stake-
20 holders. The plan shall be submitted to the President and
21 the Congress within 6 months after the date of enactment
22 of this Act.

23 (b) DRAFT PLAN.—Prior to the submission of the
24 final plan, the Under Secretary shall publish a draft plan

1 in the Federal Register with a public comment period of
2 at least 30 days.

3 (c) CONTENTS.—The plan shall—

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

8 (2) describe the roles of the National Oceanic
9 and Atmospheric Administration line offices and the
10 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
11 partner organizations in the development and deliv-
12 ery of climate products and services;

13 (3) describe the development and implementa-
14 tion of quality assurance and control mechanisms for
15 climate products and services delivered by the Na-
16 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and
17 its partner organizations;

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

1 (5) identify new responsibilities or tasks to be
2 undertaken by existing National Oceanic and Atmos-
3 pheric Administration line offices and partner orga-
4 nizations; and

5 (6) identify new infrastructure, equipment, per-
6 sonnel, or other resources needed to implement the
7 proposed plan.

8 (d) CONTINUITY OF SERVICE.—During the develop-
9 ment of the implementation plan, the public comment pe-
10 riod, and final plan, the National Oceanic and Atmos-
11 pheric Administration shall continue to provide climate
12 services to the user community.

13 (e) CONSULTATION.—In developing the plan, the
14 Under Secretary shall consult with user groups and stake-
15 holders, other Federal agencies, the Climate Service Advi-
16 sory Committee, and Congress.

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