

Summary of Climate Service Mark Up

May 14, 2009

Yesterday, the House Science and Technology Committee marked up a climate service bill entitled, The National Climate Service Act of 2009. Lewis-Burke attended the markup and provided information below.

Bill Highlights:

- The bill would establish the climate service within NOAA and would build on the resources of the National Weather Service and other programs within NOAA. It would not create a new line office.
- The structure would include a National Climate Office responsible for coordinating the NOAA programs, serving as a liaison to other federal agencies, ensuring cooperation and collaboration with stakeholders, and ensuring exchange of data, information and research with the USGCRP regarding assessments required under the Global Change Research Act of 1990. It would also consist of a network of regional and local facilities, including the regional and local offices of the NWS, the 6 Regional Climate Centers, the RISAs, and NIDIS, among others deemed appropriate.
- The Regional Climate Centers would be tasked with working cooperatively with the offices of state climatologists on gathering regional and local data, facilitating the exchange of data between the states and federal government, support research and observations, and support state and local adaptation planning.
- The RISAs would engage in cooperative research, development and demonstration projects with the academic community.
- The other NOAA line offices would also be engaged.
- The bill identifies the following 5 main services that the climate service would provide:
 1. Analysis of the effects of weather and climate on communities, including agricultural production, natural resources, energy supply and demand, recreation, etc.
 2. Observations, data collection, and monitoring of atmospheric and oceanic conditions on a statewide, regional, national and global basis.
 3. Information and technical support for federal, regional, state, tribal and local government efforts to assess and respond to climate change.
 4. Systems for the management and dissemination of data, information, and assessments.
 5. Research to improve forecasting, characterization, and understanding of weather and climate variability and change and its effects on communities.
- The bill would authorize a Climate Service Advisory Committee consisting of at least 25 members. It would include 2 subcommittees: Subcommittee on Science and Technology to advise on the research and technology development needs; and Subcommittee on Product Development and Delivery consisting of potential users of climate service products.

In addition, a couple of amendments were agreed to at the mark up, including one that would codify the RISA program. The others were focused on enhancing transparency and ensuring that the climate service activities are not duplicative.

The bill was reported out of the Energy and Environment Subcommittee this morning, even though a number of members expressed concern that the bill doesn't go far enough to promote and facilitate interagency coordination. Ranking Members Inglis stated that the bill assumes NOAA is equipped with the resources and the capacity to house the climate service and that the testimony from last week (including Eric) illustrates that NOAA is not in fact ready. Chairman Baird echoed some of these concerns and promised to work together to address them before the full committee mark up.

The ultimate plan is to roll this bill into the Waxman-Markey package.