

April 18, 2011

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
United States Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S 128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchison
Ranking Member

Dear Senator Mikulski and Senator Hutchison:

As a diverse group of business, civic, and research leaders, we urge you to protect and support programs in the FY12 budget that provide our nation with reliable, timely, and sustained environmental information and forecasts. We ask that you strongly support NOAA, NASA Earth Science, NSF Geosciences, and the U.S. Geological Survey budget requests.

The U.S. environmental information supply chain is crucial to protecting our citizens, growing our economy, and creating innovative new products and services for global markets. Reducing investment in these programs will leave our nation—the most technologically advanced in the world—without the environmental intelligence needed by government, businesses and citizens to manage risk today and in the future.

The environmental information supply chain begins with the strong science and observations—satellites, stream gauges, ocean buoys, and ground-based sensors—and ends with services that deliver actionable information to businesses; local, state and national governments; and non-profit organizations. Although spread across various agencies and provided through numerous programs, the U.S. environmental information supply chain and its resulting services touch nearly every sector of our economy from manufacturing, to transportation, to agriculture, to energy, to home building.

To compete globally and manage risk long-term, U.S. businesses, governments and communities must have access to the most timely and accurate information about our changing environment and our best forecasts for the future. When this information is threatened, so are our environmental, energy, economic and national security interests, which are all inextricably linked. For example, not having the information required for proper management of water resources can lead to inadequate water supplies, which not only poses an obvious threat to agricultural production, but also presents not-so-obvious

challenges to production of essential products such as microchips. And in the building sector, everything from site selection to materials selection depends on environmental intelligence and an understanding of regional climate.

We recognize that our country is facing the most difficult of fiscal times. However, as the United States is the most technologically advanced nation in the world, we have the responsibility and must have the foresight to protect citizens and grow the economy by leveraging government investment in Earth science, and environmental information and forecasts. Therefore, we ask that you protect and support these vital programs. Time is of the essence.

Sincerely,

Aerospace Industries Association
The Alliance for Earth Observations
American Geological Institute
American Geophysical Union
American Institute for Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA)
Ball Aerospace & Technologies Corp.
Coastal States Organization
Consortium for Ocean Leadership
ITT
The Maryland Space Business Roundtable
National Federation of Regional Associations for Coastal and Ocean Observing
National Council for Science and the Environment
National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON), Inc.
National Marine Sanctuary Foundation
National Wildlife Federation
Oregon State University
Raytheon
Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC)
Scripps Institution of Oceanography
TechAmerica Space Enterprise Council
The Planetary Society
Reinsurance Association of America
The University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR)
The Weather Coalition
World Wildlife Fund

cc: Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid
Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell