November 14, 2023

The Honorable Frank D. Lucas
Chairman
House Science, Space, and Technology
Committee
2321 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member
House Science, Space, and Technology
Committee
2321 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lucas and Ranking Member Lofgren,

We are writing as a diverse coalition of private sector, local government, and academic operators of weather observation systems. First and foremost, we want to thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to a Weather-Ready Nation through the recent introduction of H.R. 6093, the Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2023. As a coalition, we strongly endorse H.R. 6093 and encourage the House to move quickly with its consideration to ensure the Senate has time to act during the 118th Congress.

This new Act builds on the sturdy foundation of the Committee's previous work in the 115th Congress – the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act (Weather Act), which was the first significant weather legislation since the authorization of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) itself. The Weather Act created a framework for NOAA for inclusion of commercial space-based data and the development of modeling and predictive infrastructure as well as the integration of new methods of communication with the public. The Weather Act's benefits were immediate and significant, but now the time is right for Congress to undertake reauthorization of the Act with the proposed changes.

Under your leadership, the Committee and the Congress have pushed NOAA and the National Weather Service (NWS) to increasingly leverage and embrace commercial sources of weather data to improve severe weather warnings and numerical weather prediction models. Some private sector providers are now offering space-based instruments, which complement NOAA and NASA space-based platforms. The Weather Act importantly gave NOAA the authority to utilize these space-based commercial technologies, and now H.R. 6093 also specifically endorses NOAA and the NWS's continued leveraging of non-federal ground-based, ocean-based, and air-based weather observations by including an authorization for the National Mesonet Program (NMP).

The National Mesonet Program (NMP) was established by the NWS in 2009 with the urging and support of Congress, and its initial focus was on filling observation "gaps" and providing more granular, local-scale ground-based observations that are especially important for severe weather warnings. Over time, the program has steadily grown to include more than 50 network operators (see attached listing) and today delivers to NOAA additional critical observations in the boundary layer and coastal areas that vastly improve the precision and reliability of numerical weather prediction forecasts. NMP data is now also widely used outside of the NWS for agriculture, wildfire mitigation, renewable energy generation, drought monitoring and more, all with tangible benefits for businesses and taxpayers. We believe that H.R. 6093's endorsement of future growth of the program will facilitate "progress toward eliminating gaps in weather observation data by States and regions of the United States."

NATIONAL MESONET

The undersigned members of the National Mesonet Leadership Team and Advisory Board would again like to thank you for your continued leadership on weather science and forecasting issues, and we strongly endorse H.R. 6093, the Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2023.

Sincerely,

The National Mesonet Leadership Team and Advisory Board

National Mesonet Program Leadership Team

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University of Oklahoma

Ashish Raval
Synoptic Data PBC

James King
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Mark Miller
Advanced Environmental
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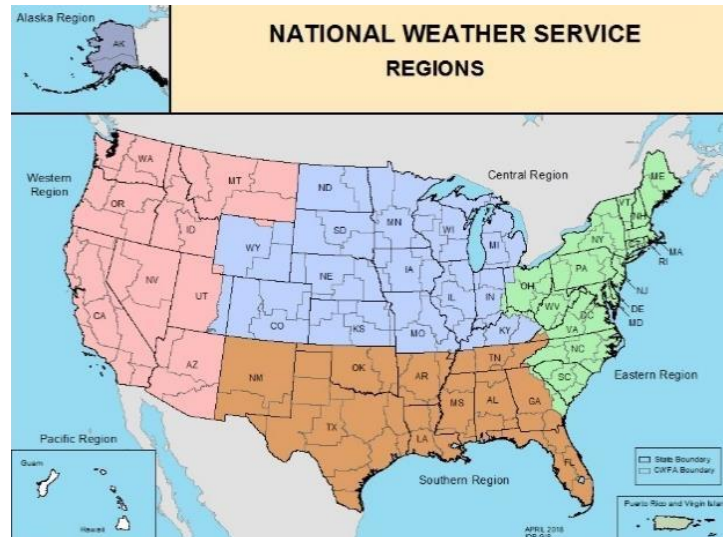Coastal Carolina University

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National Mesonet Partners

Commercial Partners
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Radiometrics
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Sonoma Technology
Spire Global
Synoptic Data PBC
WeatherFlow
WindBorne Systems

Eastern Region Partners
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University of Maryland
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University of Florida
University of Georgia
University of South Alabama

Alaska and Pacific Region Partners
University of Hawai'i
University of Alaska

Central Region Partners
Colorado State University
Hennepin County EMA
Indiana University
Iowa State University
Kansas State University
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Minnesota DNR
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South Dakota State University
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University of Missouri
University of Nebraska
University of Wisconsin
University of Wyoming
Western Kentucky University

Western Region Partners
Desert Research Institute
University of Arizona
University of Montana
University of Utah
Utah State University
Washington State University