

Response to Questions to the Record Submitted by Hon. John Thune for Mr. Barry Lee Myers

1. Section 405 of the of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (hereinafter, the Weather Act) specifically requires warning coordination meteorologists to increase NOAA's impact-based decision support services, including by liaising with users of products and services of the National Weather Service (NWS) and collaborating with State, local, and tribal governments. If confirmed, how would you seek to increase the NWS's deployment of impact-based decision support services?

Answer: I actively supported this legislation including this provision. I will serve as a blueprint to guide the agency. I am advised NOAA has taken preliminary steps to address the efficiency and effectiveness of its impact-based decision support services by commissioning a study on this topic. If confirmed as NOAA Administrator, I will review the recommendations of this new study to ensure that deployment of impact-based decision support services align with the core mission of the agency, coordinate with state, local and tribal governments, and best serve the American people.

2. As you know, one of my priorities in the Weather Act is promoting research and forecasting for seasonal and subseasonal weather conditions. These forecasts are of vital importance to the vibrant agricultural economy in my state of South Dakota and help weather-dependent businesses make long-term decisions and avoid costs and even disasters. If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring these seasonal forecasts are a high priority for NOAA going forward?

Answer: Yes. Seasonal and subseasonal weather forecasts are an emerging and important new area for the National Weather Service mission. Increasing our ability to forecast weather events, from short-term events such as tornadoes to long term events such as drought, will improve our ability to protect American lives and property and enhance the national economy.

3. The Senate Commerce Committee has jurisdiction over the United States Coast Guard, and in my role as Chairman I have continued to monitor the situation where Mexican citizens are illegally harvesting red snapper in U.S. waters off of Texas. The Coast Guard interdicts and seizes many of these lanchas, but no civil penalties have been issued by NOAA to punish and stop this behavior. I am, however, aware of NOAA moving forward with a negative certification of Mexico resulting in restriction of some port access and services in the area. Will you continue to monitor this situation and keep me informed on discussions with Mexico to dissuade these bad actors from harvesting such a valuable fish in U.S. water?

Answer: Yes. I share your concern about poaching and how it impacts our ability to sustainably manage our fisheries. According to some Coast Guard numbers, illegal fishing along the U.S.-Mexico border costs the country over \$11 million in revenue each year. I understand that red snapper is a key fish that is targeted in these launches, which

hurts not only our commercial fishermen, who then have to compete with cheaper fish on the marketplace, but also our recreational fishermen whose seasons are limited as we attempt to rebuild the stock that is illegally depleted. I will keep you informed as we investigate opportunities to curtail these incursions on our commerce.

4. Two years ago, in December 2015, the Committee first requested technical drafting assistance (TDA) from NOAA about the Fishing Capacity Reduction Program, specifically related to necessary authority. I have not received the requested TDA to date, despite numerous follow up requests. I would like to know what authority would be required for NOAA to make individual loans under the program and what authority NOAA would need to refinance Capacity Reduction loans. If confirmed, can you commit to providing the requested TDA within two months of your confirmation?

Answer: Given that a priority of mine is reducing the seafood trade deficit, I am interested in finding ways to help our commercial fisheries maximize their sustainable harvests. I share the Committee's interest in helping to put fishing businesses on a level playing field with other businesses getting federal loans and I will work expeditiously to understand the delay and work to provide the technical drafting guidance you seek.

Responses to Questions for the Record Submitted by Hon. Roger Wicker for Mr. Barry Lee Myers

Question 1. Would you agree that exploring emerging technology like smartphone apps for estimating angler catch is something NOAA Fisheries should be considering for managing saltwater recreational fisheries?

Answer. Yes. I understand there is concern with the methods that NOAA employs to estimate recreational landings because it appears that newer technology is available that could lead to more effective and timely catch count. It is difficult to effectively manage what cannot be accurately counted. It is in the best interest for all that NOAA pursue technologies to provide fishery managers with better, more reliable and real-time data to improve our recreational fishery management. Many of these technologies already exist in everyday use on mobile devices that utilize wireless communications and GPS locational technologies. I look forward to applying my private sector experience in developing mobile weather applications to facilitate these technologies for our recreational fisheries.

Question 2. What is the long term plan for NOAA to recapitalize or modernize the aging G-IV hurricane chase aircraft? Would you consider leasing a previously owned aircraft that could represent a more cost efficient option?

Answer. If confirmed, I will support the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act, to acquire back-up capabilities that are currently provided by the G-IV aircraft. As part of this back-up capability all aspects of fulfilling this need from intra-governmental aircraft sharing MOUs to supplemental data from UAVs and public private partnerships should be considered. Additionally, refurbishment or replacement should be considered. Options to ensure no lapse in this critical component of the hurricane observing network needs to be the goal.

Responses to Questions Submitted for the Record by Hon. Dean Heller for Mr. Barry Lee Myers

Question 1. As a rancher in Nevada, I check the weather every single day. I need to know about precipitation, soil moisture and temperature, changes in dewpoint, and other conditions.

Detailed weather data from NOAA is something Nevada ranchers and farmers—from Winnemucca to Ely and Elko—rely on every day to make decisions that will impact their yields for that year.

But there are some in the commercial weather industry who want to limit access to this data so it can be monetized.

Taxpayer dollars fund the collection of this data—and taxpayers should have full access to it.

Will you commit to continue collecting the weather data that allows ranchers and farmers to make informed decisions?

Answer. Yes. Weather data which is paid for with Taxpayer dollars should be available to all citizens.

Question 1a. Will you commit to not limiting the National Weather Service from releasing forecast information to the public?

Answer. Yes. Weather forecasts which are funded by Taxpayer dollars should be available to all citizens.

Question 1b. Will you commit that you will not hand over any National Weather Service data exclusively to a third party that could result in limited public access or a paywall for accessing weather data?

Answer. Yes. Weather data which is paid for with Taxpayer dollars should be available to all citizens.

Question 1c. Will you commit that private companies will not receive weather data or forecasts before the general public has access to it?

Answer. Yes. All government weather data and forecasts should be made available to all – citizens and companies alike – through uniform release mechanisms which make the information available to all simultaneously.

Question 2. Another important NOAA program in Nevada is the Western Regional Climate Center.

The research they do touches on Lake Tahoe, water conservation in Nevada, monitoring smoke from fires, drought monitoring, and wind energy assessments.

Will you commit to supporting this program and the other centers?

Answer. NOAA's Regional Climate Centers are an important tool that helps NOAA pursue research in its climate portfolio. If confirmed, I will support NOAA's mission, which includes climate, weather, and ocean research.

**Responses to Questions Submitted for the Record by Hon. Shelley Moore Capito for
Mr. Barry Lee Myers**

Question 1. NOAA has a large and significant presence in West Virginia, and we are very proud of the investment NOAA has made in my state - specifically in Fairmont, West Virginia. This facility serves as the primary backup facility for all of NOAA's emergency contingency operations. We would like to do more, and feel we have the people and the capabilities to do so. For example, WV plays a role, and can do more, in the realm of high performance computing. Most recently, the West Virginia facility serves as the Consolidated Backup Facility for the GOES-R, now GOES-16, satellite mission that launched in November 2016 and was so vital in forecasting operations for the most recent hurricanes, including Hurricane Marie as it neared Puerto Rico last week. Will you commit to working with me to strengthen NOAA's partnership in Fairmont?

Answer. Yes. I understand that NOAA's facility in Fairmont has a quality reputation and is a linchpin in the I-79 Technology Park. If confirmed, I would appreciate the opportunity to visit the facility and investigate opportunities to strengthen NOAA's partnership in Fairmont.