

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND  
TRANSPORTATION**

Nominations  
Wednesday, July 9, 2025, at 10.00 A.M.

**DEMOCRATIC QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD**

**COVER PAGE**  
**Taylor Jordan**

## **RANKING MEMBER MARIA CANTWELL (D-WA)**

***NOAA Organic Act and Weather Act.*** During Secretary Lutnick's confirmation hearing in January, he testified that he did not support breaking up and dismantling NOAA. Unfortunately, that's exactly what the Administration is doing via executive actions.

One way to ensure certainty about NOAA's products and services that American families rely upon is to authorize NOAA in statute.

*Question 1:* Yes or No: Do you support a NOAA Organic Act? If no, why not?

*Answer:* Yes, an organic act, at a high level, would provide clarity to NOAA's mission in statute. There is also value in not being overly prescriptive in an organic act to allow NOAA the flexibility to quickly evolve priorities and capabilities to improve its mission.

*Question 2:* How would having an Organic Act protect communities from these disasters?

*Answer:* NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in weather, oceans, climate, and coasts, and to share that information with decision-makers. Authorizing NOAA's mission would provide communities with continued critical information to protect against impacts from environmental phenomena.

*Question 3:* Yes or No: Do you support the Weather Act Reauthorization? If no, why not?

*Answer:* I support continuing to authorize NOAA's public safety mission and ensuring weather research is transitioned to operations. I look forward to working with the Committee.

***Tribal Consultation.*** With 29 tribes in the Northwest, we understand the importance of government-to-government consultation. However, sometimes agencies forget this and I hope you can help restore that process.

*Question 1:* Yes or No: Do you support Tribal government to government consultation?

*Answer:* Yes.

*Question 2:* Tribes are impacted by weather forecasts, sea level rise, and climate change. Do you agree that Tribes should be consulted on weather and resilience related programs, in addition to fisheries?

*Answer:* Yes.

*Question 3:* Will you ensure NOAA is adequately staffed so that Tribes are able to access meaningful government-to-government consultation and technical assistance on NOAA programs, including grants?

*Answer:* If confirmed, I will ensure NOAA is appropriately staffed to fulfill its mission.

***Dismantling the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).*** The Trump Administration is pursuing a FY 2026 budget proposal that would reduce NOAA's budget by 27 percent, eliminate Congressionally mandated programs, and transfer part of the National Marine Fisheries Service to the Interior Department.

During his confirmation hearing, Secretary Lutnick told me that he has, "no interest in separating" NOAA and that breaking up NOAA, "is not on my agenda." Yet, that is exactly what the Administration is trying to do.

*Question 1:* Do you support any function, mission, or congressionally authorized or appropriated work within NOAA, or executed by NOAA, being moved out of the NOAA or the Department of Commerce? If yes, please describe.

*Answer:* I am not at NOAA and not privy to any discussions related to NOAA programs or offices. If confirmed, I will ensure that NOAA's mission across line offices continues to execute with operational excellence regardless of potential organizational changes. I will prioritize improving NOAA's capabilities to provide benefit to the American taxpayer.

***NOAA Workforce Reductions.*** I have serious concerns about the current state of NOAA's workforce. Since January 2025, NOAA has lost a combined 27,000 years of experience. The resulting brain drain has impacted the entire agency. Overall, NOAA now has more than 3,000 vacant positions across the agency.

On February 19, 2025, I sent a letter to Secretary Lutnick urging him to protect NOAA's critical workforce from the Trump Administration's reduction-in-force initiatives and hiring freeze, which would jeopardize the safety of the American public. Despite this warning, about 600 probationary employees were fired across various NOAA line offices, and over 1,000 employees have left through voluntary separation programs. These staffing shortages are disrupting NOAA's core functions. For instance, weather balloon launches have been suspended, and multiple Weather Forecast Offices no longer able to staff overnight shifts.

*Question 1:* Yes or No: Do you believe NOAA can operate at its peak effectiveness when it has over 3,000 positions vacant?

*Answer:* I am currently not at NOAA and can not speak to specific program operations and staffing at this time. If confirmed, I will work to ensure NOAA continues to deliver and provide critical environmental information. I am confident that NOAA's workforce remains dedicated to scientific excellence and mission success.

*Question 2:* Yes or No: Do you think that the agency's ability to carry out its mission effectively has been impacted by the loss of about 2,000 officials since January?

*Answer:* I am currently not at NOAA and can not speak to specific program operations and staffing at this time. As we have seen with recent National Weather Service forecasts during high-impact weather events, NOAA staff continue to provide life-saving information to decision-

makers. I understand that NOAA has been granted exemption authority to staff the National Weather Service.

*Question 3:* What specific steps would you take to protect NOAA's workforce and ensure staff capacity to execute NOAA's core missions?

*Answer:* If confirmed, I will continue to support NOAA's mission and ensure that it is adequately staffed to carry out its mission.

*Question 4:* What specific steps would you take to ensure the National Weather Service has sufficient staff for all Weather Forecast Offices and to provide Americans with accurate and timely weather warnings?

*Answer:* I understand that NOAA has been granted authority to staff the National Weather Service. If confirmed, I will work with the National Weather Service and human capital services to ensure NOAA appropriately fills vacancies under the exceptions.

*Question 5:* Executive Order 14170 implements a federal hiring freeze, but it allows for exclusions for positions related to public safety. The National Weather Service has been given a limited exemption to rehire 126 positions. Would you advocate for an exemption to the hiring freeze under for any other NOAA positions? If so, which positions?

*Answer:* I am currently not at NOAA and can not speak to specific program operations and personnel at this time. If confirmed, I will continue to ensure that NOAA is adequately staffed to meet its mission and will evaluate how best to fulfill our critical mission areas across all offices.

*Question 6:* What is your plan for rebuilding the base of expertise that has been lost, ensuring that our science remains cutting edge, and retaining experts that are otherwise likely to leave for work in other nations?

*Answer:* If confirmed, I will continue to support NOAA's mission of understanding and predicting changes in weather, oceans, climate, and coasts, and providing that information to decision-makers. I will ensure that NOAA remains a global leader in environmental science and delivers results for the American people by leveraging investments in modernization as well as talent development and retention efforts.

**NOAA Budget.** The FY 2026 Presidential Budget \$4.5B for NOAA, which would be a 27% decrease in funding from the enacted FY25 continuing resolution.

*Question 1:* Yes or No: Do you support the FY 2026 Presidential Budget for NOAA?

*Answer:* Yes. I support the President's budget request for NOAA.

*Question 2:* How would you maintain NOAA's leadership in ocean and atmospheric science under the proposed budget?

Answer: NOAA's FY26 Presidential Budget Request streamlines agency operations, prioritizes its public safety mission, and maintains NOAA's leadership in ocean and atmospheric sciences.

**NOAA Research.** The FY 2026 Presidential Budget proposes eliminating the Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) as a line office. The budget would terminate all funding for NOAA's Research Laboratories and Cooperative Institutes, Regional Climate Data and Information, Climate Competitive Research, National Sea Grant College Program, and the National Oceanographic Partnership Program.

*Question 1:* Yes or no, do you support eliminating OAR? If yes, explain why.

*Answer:* I support the President's budget request for NOAA. The budget request streamlines agency operations and prioritizes its public safety mission, while providing for efficiencies within NOAA research by more closely aligning operational and research components to foster collaboration and drive innovation. This realignment will strengthen delivery of actionable science to NOAA's operational end-users and remain responsive to the needs of the public.

*Question 2:* Do you believe NOAA/NWS forecasts improvements will flatline or degrade if this critical research is eliminated?

*Answer:* No.

*Question 3:* How do you define climate?

*Answer:* As defined for environmental phenomena in the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017, "seasonal" is defined as the time range between 3 months and 2 years, and "subseasonal" is defined as the time range between 2 weeks and 3 months. Discussions also indicated "weather" as the time between 0 days and 2 weeks, and "climate" as the time range beyond 2 years. I continue to believe these definitions are appropriate for patterns and trends in environmental phenomena.

*Question 4:* What do you believe is NOAA's role in climate research?

*Answer:* NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in weather, oceans, climate, and coasts, and to provide this information. NOAA accomplishes this goal for climate research through long-term observations, modelling, and analysis.

*Question 5:* Do you support fully funding NOAA's Cooperative Institutes?

*Answer:* I support the President's budget request to streamline agency operations, prioritize its public safety mission, and find efficiencies.

*Question 6:* Do you support fully funding the NOAA Research Laboratories?

*Answer:* I support the President's budget request to streamline agency operations, prioritize its public safety mission, and find efficiencies.

*Question 7:* The National Severe Storm Laboratory's experimental Warn-on-Forecast System is working to improve lead times for tornado and severe weather warnings. Do you support continuing the Warn-on-Forecast System and similar weather research efforts?

*Answer:* While I am not currently at NOAA and do not have specific program visibility, I will continue to support high priority weather research programs. As NOAA operational end-users identify successful research to improve the mission of public safety, I support transitioning research programs into operations to keep Americans out of harm's way.

*Question 8:* How will you ensure the safety of the American public if OAR programs that aim to prepare communities to face extreme weather events are dismantled?

*Answer:* I will continue to support NOAA's mission of providing environmental data and ensuring that NOAA is adequately staffed to meet this mission. My understanding is that programs that support community preparedness for extreme weather are being realigned to ensure they support operational end-users.

***Climate Adaptation Partnerships.*** There are 13 NOAA Climate Adaptation Partnership teams around the country. And yet, the grant to only one, the Northwest Climate Resilience Collaborative (NCRC) based at the University of Washington, remains terminated by the Administration.

The NCRC team addresses unique needs of the region, including those related to extreme heat that led to more than 400 deaths in Washington due to the "heat dome" that descended on the region during the summer of 2021. NCRC also helps vulnerable populations to mitigate against the negative health effects of wildfire smoke and extreme heat.

*Question 1:* Could you provide us with the rationale for why this grant is the only one that remains terminated?

*Answer:* I am not currently at NOAA and do not have visibility into specific programs or grant terminations..

*Question 2:* Another team has had its grant restored. What steps can the NCRC take to have its grant restored?

*Answer:* I am not currently at NOAA and do not have visibility into specific programs or grant terminations.

***Scientific Integrity.*** NOAA defines scientific integrity as "the adherence to professional practices, ethical behavior, and the principles of honesty and objectivity when conducting, managing, using the results of, and communicating about science and scientific activities. Inclusivity, transparency, and protection from inappropriate influence are hallmarks of scientific integrity."

*Question 1:* Do you commit to uphold and abide by NOAA's scientific integrity policy if confirmed?

*Answer:* I am committed to promoting scientific integrity at NOAA.

*Question 2:* What specific lessons have you learned about the importance of abiding by NOAA's scientific integrity policies from your experience at NOAA during the first Trump Administration?

*Answer:* From my previous experience at the agency, NOAA scientists and forecasters develop expert environmental information and communicate this information to decision-makers, including at the local level. Their relationships with local officials and emergency managers provide critical linkages to ensure the public receives NOAA's information in a timely and accurate manner.

*Question 3:* What specific steps will you take to ensure that NOAA's forecasts cannot be compromised and career scientists are empowered to publish and communicate their findings without political interference in the future?

*Answer:* I have and will continue to rely on NOAA's workforce to provide environmental information and will let science drive decision-making.

**Contract Review.** Currently, all NOAA contracts and grants greater than \$100k require Secretary Lutnick's personal approval. There are thousands of contracts and grants that meet that threshold. As you can imagine, this has resulted in a significant bottleneck, causing critical contracts to terminate, lapse, or be signed mere hours before they expire.

*Question 1:* Do you support this practice?

*Answer:* I support Secretary Lutnick conducting thorough reviews of Department of Commerce contracts.

*Question 2:* What will you do to ensure NOAA contracts are reviewed in a timely and efficient manner without inadvertent lapses?

*Answer:* I will work closely with NOAA and the Department of Commerce to assist in timely review of contracts.

*Question 3:* Will you commit to alerting Congress of the lapse or cancellation of any monetarily or operationally significant contracts in a timely manner?

*Answer:* I will work through the appropriate Congressional Affairs office and the Department of Commerce to ensure information is transmitted in a timely manner.

**NOAA Authorizing Legislation.** NOAA currently lacks an overarching law authorizing the agency's missions and operations.

*Question 1:* Do you support a NOAA Organic Act?

*Answer:* Yes, an organic act, at a high level, would provide clarity to NOAA's mission in statute. There is also value in not being overly prescriptive in an organic act to allow NOAA the flexibility to quickly evolve priorities and capabilities to improve its mission.

*Question 2:* Do you support the Weather Act Reauthorization?

*Answer:* I support continuing to authorize NOAA's public safety mission and ensuring weather research is transitioned to operations. I look forward to working with the Committee.

***Geostationary Extended Observations (GeoXO) Satellite System.*** As the GOES-R satellites end their operational lifetime, the GeoXO satellites will replace them. Currently NOAA plans to launch six satellites with instruments including a lightning mapper (LMX), Sounder (GXS), Atmospheric Composition (ACX), Imager (GXI), and Ocean Color (OCX). The GeoXO Sounder will improve regional forecast accuracy by 40% and is tailored to improve forecasts of rapidly changing convective events like the severe storms that caused catastrophic flooding in Texas.

*Question 1:* Do you support NOAA's current plan for six satellites?

*Answer:* I am not currently at NOAA and do not know the status of current instrument contracts and their life-cycle procurement and management. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing NOAA's plan for the GeoXO constellation.

*Question 2:* What can NOAA do to maintain the launch timeline and avoid a gap in coverage?

*Answer:* To maintain launch timelines and avoid data gaps, NOAA should ensure it works with its federal partners and stakeholders on procurement schedules, system integration, and constellation management. NOAA should also, where appropriate and feasible, consider partnerships with other federal agencies and the private sector for unique orbits and data that support public safety and operational readiness.

*Question 3:* The plan laid out for the GeoXO program during the first Trump Administration also included economically beneficial ocean color, atmospheric composition, and lightning mapper observations. These instruments help us monitor air quality impacts from pollution and smoke, predict the intensity of hurricanes and respond to wildfires, and track ocean pollution, water quality, and hazards like harmful algal blooms that can impact fisheries and water supplies. Do you still support including instruments for these observations on GeoXO satellites?

*Answer:* I am not currently at NOAA and do not know the status of current instrument contracts and their life-cycle procurement and management. If confirmed, I look forward to reviewing NOAA's plan for the GeoXO constellation. I will continue to support and assist in managing NOAA's observing networks that improve NOAA's mission and support public safety.

*Question 4:* Do you support cancelling existing contracts that would incur large penalties?



*Answer:* I am not currently at NOAA and do not have insight into individual instrument contracting terms, processes, or schedule. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Secretary Lutnick and the NOAA Administrator in the review of contracts.

***Extreme Weather.*** According to NOAA, since 1980 we've had an average of nine extreme weather events annually that cost over \$1 billion each. However, in the last five years, that has spiked to 23 events per year, and last year it was 27 events. Climate change is driving more intense hurricanes, more frequent severe atmospheric rivers, rain events, and is doubling the number of wildfires. NOAA plays a principal role in ensuring the American public is informed and prepared to respond to extreme weather events.

*Question 1:* As extreme weather events across the country become more frequent, what do you believe is NOAA's role in coordinating resilience and response efforts?

*Answer:* NOAA's mission is to understand and predict changes in weather, oceans, climate, and coasts, and to provide this information. NOAA provides data, tools, and forecasting to federal partners and the public.

*Question 2:* How will you improve NOAA's cooperation with local emergency managers during extreme weather events?

*Answer:* In supporting NOAA's mission to provide environmental information to decision-makers, I will ensure that the National Weather Service continues to embed with local emergency managers to convey timely and accurate environmental information.

*Question 3:* NOAA/NWS radars are nearing end of life. What plan would you enact as NOAA Administrator to ensure these crucial instruments are upgraded and replaced with little to no interruption of data?

*Answer:* If confirmed, I will work to ensure NOAA radar systems continue to meet mission requirements and that advanced planning is underway to eventually replace these systems in the future using the best available science and innovation.

***Commercial Data and Services.*** Project 2025 proposes that "NWS should fully commercialize its forecasting operations" and encourages increased use of private sector data and services. As a government agency funded by taxpayer money, NOAA is a trusted source of free, reliable data.

*Question 1:* What do you see as NOAA's core government functions that cannot be privatized or commercialized, especially at NWS and NESDIS?

*Answer:* NOAA's public safety mission and its weather forecasting are core government functions that Americans across the country rely on every day. NOAA has historically utilized data and expertise from non-government sources to help it create and improve its own numerical weather prediction and modelling, this is most evident in NWS and NESDIS in programs such as the Mesonet Program and NESDIS' acquisition of satellites, as well as commercial data

programs. NOAA relies heavily on non-governmental partners to help build its observing networks and infrastructure. The products and services derived from these observing systems and infrastructure are the core government functions that are provided to every American every day.

*Question 2:* How will you ensure that NOAA avoids “vendor lock” when incorporating more commercial data and services?

*Answer:* NOAA takes commercial marketplace offerings into consideration when reviewing potential new sources of data. Increased use of industry engagement, such as industry days, general requests for information, and advanced planning can help ensure NOAA has an adequate understanding of commercial capabilities, and where these capabilities align NOAA mission needs.

*Question 3:* Currently, NOAA data is openly available to the public, but if NOAA buys data from private companies using taxpayer money, how will you ensure data will be made publicly available?

*Answer:* NOAA’s products and services are made available to the public. NOAA has historically acquired data from non-traditional or non-governmental partners, often with open redistribution licenses. There have been instances of small redistribution restrictions, however NOAA and government end-users, as well as researchers, have access to these datasets.

*Question 4:* Do you agree that NOAA satellites and associated ground and data systems are core public infrastructure and a national security asset?

*Answer:* NOAA’s current and planned satellites and ground systems in use are taxpayer funded public infrastructure and national security assets.

***NWS Tornado Forecasting Warning Services.*** A DOC Inspector General Audit was published on July 8, 2025, evaluating NOAA and NWS’s tornado forecasting and warning services.

*Question 1:* Do you commit to implementing the recommendations made by the DOC IG audit?

*Answer:* I will work with NOAA staff to find a path forward that meets the intended outcome of this recommendation and protects lives and property.

### ***Climate Change.***

*Question 1:* Yes or No: Do you agree with the scientific consensus that human activity is the primary cause of climate change?

*Answer:* NOAA’s mission is to understand and predict changes in weather, oceans, climate, and coasts. NOAA will continue to accomplish this goal through long-term observations, cutting-edge modeling, and scientific analysis.

*Question 2:* Yes or No: Do you agree with the scientific consensus that climate change is driving more intense and more frequent severe weather events?

*Answer:* Scientific consensus, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's latest Assessment Report, for intense and frequent severe weather events is not uniform across each type and phenomena, with some phenomena such as tropical cyclones, tornadoes, hail, and floods receiving low confidence in observed trends, and others like extratropical storms and extreme winds receiving medium confidence. NOAA will continue to work to understand and predict changes in the weather, oceans, climate, and coasts.

## **SENATOR TAMMY DUCKWORTH (D-IL)**

1. Can you commit to fully recusing yourself from any NOAA policy or procurement decisions involving your former clients, including Spire Global, AccuWeather and Lynker?

*Answer:* I have worked with the career staff of the Office of Government Ethics to ensure that I am complying with applicable laws and conflicts of interest. I will continue to follow the law and work with the Office of Government Ethics, Department of Commerce lawyers, and NOAA lawyers to ensure I remain compliant with all laws.

2. What is your view on the role of the Federal Government in providing core weather and climate services, and how will you protect NOAA's public-service mission from undue commercial influence?

*Answer:* I support NOAA's mission to understand and predict changes in weather, oceans, climate, and coasts, and to provide that information to decision-makers. I will ensure that NOAA continues to provide its public-safety mission to the public.

1. Please answer with "yes" or "no". Was President Biden certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election because President Biden received more votes than President Trump in the 2020 presidential election?

*Answer:* Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

2. Please answer with "yes" or "no". Did President Trump lose the 2020 presidential election?

*Answer:* Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

3. Please answer with "yes" or "no". Did President Trump lose the popular vote in the 2020 presidential election?

*Answer:* Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

4. Please answer with “yes” or “no”. Did President Trump lose the electoral college in the 2020 presidential election?

*Answer:* Former President Joseph Biden was certified as the winner of the 2020 presidential election and sworn in as the forty-sixth President on January 20, 2021.

5. If you were unable or unwilling to provide a “yes” or “no” answer to any of the prior questions, please provide a detailed explanation justifying your refusal to provide such a clear and simple answer, including whether your refusal to provide a simple “yes” or “no” answer indicates that you believe President Trump received more votes than President Biden in the 2020 presidential election.

*Answer:* See my responses to questions 1-4 above.

The 14th Amendment states. “*No person shall be a Senator or Representative in Congress, or elector of President and Vice-President, or hold any office, civil or military, under the United States, or under any State, who, having previously taken an oath, as a member of Congress, or as an officer of the United States, or as a member of any State legislature, or as an executive or judicial officer of any State, to support the Constitution of the United States, shall have engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof. But Congress may by a vote of two-thirds of each House, remove such disability.*”

1. Where were you on January 6, 2021?

*Answer:* I was at my home in Washington, DC.

2. Do you believe the events at the Capitol on January 6, 2021, were an insurrection, a rebellion against the Constitution of the United States, or both—and if you do not believe the events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol on that date comprised an insurrection or rebellion against the Constitution, please provide a detailed explanation explaining your belief.

*Answer:* This question is outside of the scope of my nomination to be an Assistant Secretary within the Department of Commerce.

3. Why did you choose to resign, or choose not to resign, as a NOAA Senior Policy Advisor on January 6, 2021, or in the following days?

*Answer:* Prior to January 6, 2021, I had left government employment to seek other career opportunities.

4. Do you support President Trump's decision to "grant a full, complete and unconditional pardon to all other individuals convicted of offenses related to events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021"?

*Answer:* This question is outside of the scope of my nomination to be an Assistant Secretary within the Department of Commerce. If confirmed, I look forward to working with the President and this Committee.

5. Do you believe President Trump's decision to "grant a full, complete and unconditional pardon to all other individuals convicted of offenses related to events that occurred at or near the United States Capitol on January 6, 2021" is consistent with supporting law enforcement?

*Answer:* The pardon power belongs to the President. I have always rejected violence against law enforcement.

## **SENATOR JOHN FETTERMAN (D-PA)**

1. Mr. Jordan, you will also work in NOAA operations. Will you commit to work with me and my office to expeditiously finalize Lake Erie's designation as a national marine sanctuary in your role with NOAA if confirmed?

*Answer:* While the Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Environmental Observation and Prediction does not directly work on national marine sanctuary issues, I understand this issue is important to you and will work with the NOAA Administrator and staff to be responsive to your request.