



U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations

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Contact: Tom Gavin, 202-224-3904

U.S. Senate Appropriations Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee Opening Statement of Subcommittee Chairman Barbara Mikulski

*INNOVATION, EDUCATION, ACCOUNTABILITY
ARE KEY IN SCIENCE BUDGET REQUESTS*

WASHINGTON, D.C. . At the U.S. Senate Appropriations Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee hearing on Thursday, Chairman Senator Barbara A. Mikulski (D-Md.) stressed innovation, education and accountability as the subcommittee evaluated the National Science Foundation's (NSF) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) fiscal year 2008 budget requests. Senator Mikulski's opening statement is below.

Good morning and welcome to the second hearing of the Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee. This is our second hearing on the theme of innovation . looking at the opportunities in our subcommittee to make us more competitive.

Today, we'll be examining the budget requests for the National Science Foundation and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. We will focus on innovation, education and accountability.

This hearing isn't just about line items in the budget. It's about science and the global environment. We're holding this hearing in the midst of an awakening in this country . an acknowledgement that global climate change is a crisis. This hearing is about the future of our country and our planet.

This CJS Subcommittee is the innovation subcommittee. As the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, tells us, innovation is three things:

- " Research . creating new products and processes that create jobs
- " Education . to inspire and educate our next generation of scientists and engineers
- " Policies . to make us an innovation friendly government

NSF and NOAA are two key innovation agencies that lead to discoveries that have the power to save lives, protect the environment, and create prosperity. I'm pleased that

NSF is in the President's innovation agenda, and that the subcommittee's innovation agenda includes NOAA.

Innovation research is about chemistry and physics, but it's also about earth science. Understanding the earth is a basic necessity, because we need to understand our planet and its environments in order to make sound policy decisions. And if we don't understand the earth, we can't save it.

NOAA and NSF give us the scientific basis for sound policy decisions. If America is going to be more competitive, we must focus on promoting innovation and discovery.

The CJS Subcommittee is going green. What do I mean by that? Research at NSF and NOAA, as well as NASA, provides the fundamental understanding of our planet . from the bottom of the ocean, to the upper reaches of the atmosphere. As we look at the budget requests for NSF and NOAA, we will follow the roadmaps given to us: NASA's "Rising Above the Gathering Storm" report (the 10-year assessment of earth science) and the blueprint given to us by the Joint Ocean Commission Initiative.

Seventy percent of the earth is covered by oceans. When you look from space, Earth is the big blue. Our nation's economy depends on the oceans. Oceans contribute \$120 billion to our economy and support over 2 million jobs. Oceans influence the weather. Oceans are about innovation and discovery. Getting people excited about oceans, gets them excited about science. The 21st century demands scientific literacy, and oceans can give us the key to breakthroughs in health and science. That's why we must better protect and understand our oceans and what is in them.

We can't address innovation, climate change or education without first looking at accountability. We are facing a very tight budget, with many competing demands. We take our oversight role very seriously and demand competency and accountability. NOAA's satellites and NSF's research stations and observatories are critical tools that study the oceans, atmosphere and space.

But we've seen major cost overruns and schedule slippages. These management challenges have direct impacts on the quantity and quality of scientific measurements. And we must make sure that once the data is collected it is put to use and does not end up in a data mortuary.

Finally, we will demand cooperation between and among agencies all our agencies . maximizing, not duplicating, efforts.

Accountability also means competency. Last year, I asked the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to look at the media policies of our science agencies to make sure there is openness in communication of federal scientific research. GAO is wrapping up its work for me and will conclude in April. I am concerned that NOAA's policies are unclear and may not facilitate the dissemination of research.

I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today . Dr. Arden Bement, the Director of the National Science Foundation, and Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher Jr., the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere, and Administrator of NOAA . about how the NSF and NOAA budget requests foster innovation, make America more competitive, and help us better understand our planet, while maximizing taxpayer dollars.

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