



UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

SCHOOL OF MARINE AFFAIRS

VADM Conrad C. Lautenbacher  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA]  
Room 5128  
14<sup>th</sup> St & Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20230

September 10, 2008

Dear VADM Lautenbacher:

On behalf of the NOAA Science Advisory Board I am pleased to transmit the Final report of our Working Group to Examine Advisory Options for Improving Communications among NOAA's Partners, in short the Partnership Working Group [PWG]. We believe that the effort of the PWG provides a useful pathway for increasing the communication between NOAA and its many partners. While the immediate focus is on one aspect of NOAA's mission, i.e., the weather enterprise, the PWG recommendations may have broader significance for NOAA. They may provide guidance to NOAA in areas where key NOAA partners indicate they do not believe that there is adequate opportunity to provide input and receive feedback.

As a result of discussions between the National Weather Service and external partners in the weather enterprise, NOAA asked the NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB) to consider the options available for NOAA to solicit advice from the external community for its entire environmental enterprise.

A working group was constituted and its discussions with the representatives from the Department of Commerce and NOAA, resulted in a PWG primary finding was that ***the status quo (continued ad hoc use of existing advisory mechanisms) is inadequate because NOAA's practice is occasional, ad hoc use motivated by only NOAA concerns and NOAA's comfort with the existing advisory mechanisms.***

The PWG explored seven alternative ways NOAA could address this set of issues and settled on a recommendation of a phased approach which is captured in the NOAA SAB motion found below from its Sandusky, Ohio meeting in July 2008.

**Action 1:** The NOAA Science Advisory Board, subject to this motion, accepts the Final Report from the Working Group to Examine Advisory Options for Improving Communications among NOAA's Partners and will transmit the recommendations to NOAA.

**Motion:**

The NOAA Science Advisory Board (NOAA SAB), having received the report of its Partnership Working Group, recommends establishment of a standing Environmental Information Services Working Group (EISWG) as a mechanism to address scientific interactions between NOAA and its Partners. The initial focus of the EISWG is to advise on issues raised and enhance effective collaboration between the National Weather Service and its partners and the composition of the Working Group will reflect those interests. In the interim, the NOAA Science Advisory Board would entertain requests from other NOAA line offices, goal teams, and NOAA partners to use the EISWG to provide advice on issues of importance with partners. If additional partnership issues are raised, EISWG composition would be broadened to insure appropriate input from other NOAA Federal Advisory Act Committees, NOAA partners and persons with expertise on communication and service delivery.

The NOAA SAB sees the establishment of EISWG as an interim solution. One year after the first meeting of the EISWG, the NOAA SAB will evaluate the effectiveness of this WG as a mechanism for providing advice to NOAA on partnership issues relating to environmental information services. Following that evaluation, the SAB will recommend other steps as deemed necessary, including possible pursuit of a FACA board chartered for addressing interactions between NOAA and its partners.

Following this letter of transmittal, the NOAA SAB hopes to hear a preliminary report at our October 2008 meeting on how NOAA is considering implementing these recommendations. No later than the March 2009 the NOAA SAB would appreciate a report on how implementation is taking place. One year following implementation, the PWG recommends and the NOAA SAB approves, we will review how well this mechanism functions to achieve the goal of receiving and responding to feedback in the NOAA weather enterprise.

As always, the NOAA SAB applauds the support for independent scientific review inside NOAA and we genuinely hope that the recommendations of the PWG will assist NOAA in fulfilling its multiple missions. If we can provide clarifications or otherwise assist in NOAA's deliberations in this important matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



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