



January 19, 2012

The Honorable Jane Lubchenco, Administrator
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
14th Street & Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Dr. Lubchenco:

On behalf of the NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB), I am pleased to transmit to you the report from the Data Archive and Access Requirements Working Group (DAARWG) that was presented to and accepted by the SAB at the November, 2011 meeting. This report, "Assessing the Use of Data from non-NOAA Sources", provides guidelines for developing a NOAA policy on the use of environmental data from external sources for various mission purposes. It aims to provide the basis for creating a NOAA policy that can aid in deciding whether or not to acquire data from non-NOAA sources and proposes standards to be applied to such acquisitions. Though NOAA has used data from external sources throughout its history, the DAARWG found such use has often been on an *ad hoc* basis. The intent of this document is to inform a potential NOAA policy that would apply particularly when external data are relied upon for operational purposes or decision-making.

In this report, the DAARWG presents a list of policy elements in terms of broad principles that could apply NOAA-wide. Specific policies and implementation details will need to be tailored to the needs of various line and program offices. In addition, different parts of these guidelines will be applicable to different uses within NOAA so a tiered approach within this policy may be required to provide flexibility to match the diversity of NOAA's programs.

NOAA's growing activities in observing, analysis, prediction, and response will involve the cooperative use of external data from governmental and non-governmental data sources at both national and international levels. On the Federal level, the long-term objective of creating a national climate portal will involve the cooperative use of large data sets. The SAB believes that NOAA has a leadership role to play in this activity. A timely NOAA policy for the use of external data could improve NOAA's data activities and serve as a model for wider collaborative adoption by partners.

Please let me know of any question or comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RJB".

Raymond J. Ban
Chair, NOAA Science Advisory Board
Consultant, Weather Industry & Government Partnerships

Enclosure

cc: Bill Townsend
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