



The University of Oklahoma
NATIONAL WEATHER CENTER

29 August 2017

Lynn Scarlett
Chair, NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB)

Reference: Potential Topics for SAB Discussion by the “Gang of four”

Dear Ms. Scarlett:

During the July 2017 NOAA Science Advisory Board (SAB) teleconference, the SAB charged the Environmental Information Services Working Group (EISWG) with reviewing the three topics raised in the memorandum regarding “Potential Topics for SAB Discussion”. At the highest level, these topics are:

Topic 1: Value of information

- Quantification and documentation of the value of information gathered by NOAA
- Better understanding of how information is used
- Better communication of the value of NOAA information

Topic 2: The benefits of large-scale ecosystem restoration

Topic 3: Enhancing and harmonizing the delivery of environmental services across NOAA

The EISWG agrees that these are appropriate and important topics for the SAB to pursue, and welcomes the opportunity to collaborate both with the SAB and other working groups.

There are a number of possibilities for how the EISWG could assist the SAB in addressing Topic 1 for NOAA. The EISWG recognizes this topic is broad and complex, and feels it could entail a significant amount of effort to address fully.

NOAA collects/generates and then either distributes or makes accessible both data and information products¹ to a wide range of users. With respect to Topic 1,

¹ Several EISWG members indicated the importance to be precise in discussing “data” versus “information” products.

the EISWG believes it is essential to improve NOAA’s understanding of how these data and information products are used. Implicit in the formulation of Topic 1, communication and interpretation of environmental information determine its use, and must be addressed in any assessment of the value of environmental information (VoEI). The EISWG recognizes this is a non-trivial task, yet one of the most important areas to address.

The Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 highlights the importance to NOAA of using a VoEI framework in strategic planning. In light of this, we have several questions we think it would be worthwhile for the SAB to ask NOAA:

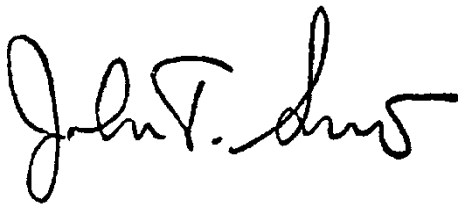
1. How is the VoEI information utilized at present in NOAA strategic planning and the setting of investment priorities, both overall and in the line offices?
2. What are NOAA’s plans to improve the use of VoEI in setting priorities, such as for weather and climate research?
3. What information related to VoEI is available from NOAA, the SAB, and other SAB working groups?

The EISWG is well positioned to provide input on Topic 1, given the range of expertise of working group members and their diverse perspectives on the value of environmental information across sectors and domains.

As a way to begin addressing Topic 1, EISWG offers to assist, perhaps in a joint effort involving the Data Archive and Access Requirements Working Group (DAARWG) and other working groups, in reviewing NOAA’s framework for this topic.

The EISWG appreciates the opportunity to support the SAB in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John T. Snow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" being the most prominent part.

John T. Snow
Co-Chair, EISWG