

# Environmental Information Services Working Group

*A working group of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Science Advisory Board*

3 July 2019

**To:** Lynn Scarlett, Chair, NOAA Science Advisory Board

**CC:** Robert Winokur, SAB Liaison to the Environmental Information Services Working Group

Everette Joseph, SAB Liaison to the Environmental Information Services Working Group

Cynthia Decker, NOAA SAB Executive Director

**SUBJECT:** Second NOAA SAB EISWG report to the US Congress, as required by the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-25, 18 April 2017), as amended (P.L. 115-423, 7 January 2019)

Dear Ms. Scarlett:

This is the second report to the United States Congress from the Environmental Information Services Working Group (EISWG), a working group of the Science Advisory Board (SAB) to National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). It is made in accordance with Title IV, Sec. 401(c) of the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (P.L. 115-25, signed 18 April 2017), as amended (P.L. 115-423, 7 January 2019) (hereafter, the Weather Act), which assigns EISWG the following responsibility:

*“ANNUAL REPORT.—Not less frequently than once each year, the Working Group shall transmit to the Science Advisory Board for submission to the Under Secretary a report on progress made by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in adopting the Working Group’s recommendations. ...”*

The limited time and resources available to the EISWG require that it maintain a collaborative and consultative annual process with NOAA Line Offices in order to carry out its assigned role in the attainment of the objectives of the Weather Act. While it is clear there are limits on what the working group can do based on resourcing, the EISWG is addressing topics in the Weather Act systematically as it works through priorities with NOAA.

In the first year (2018), the EISWG’s efforts focused on the implementation of a reactive review process for the series of reports required of NOAA by the Weather Act. In this second year, the EISWG realized this was going to be a slow process because many of

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the reports are complex, requiring extended periods for development and internal review within NOAA and the Executive Branch..

Therefore, in addition to reviewing the required reports as they become available from the NOAA Line Offices, the EISWG is developing its own assessments of key Weather Act topics based on presentations by both NOAA staff and external experts, and extended discussions at EISWG meetings with these presenters. The presentations and discussion are summarized by a small task group into a brief report that outlines the state of the topic within NOAA, followed by any necessary recommendations. After review by the full EISWG membership, the report is forwarded to the NOAA SAB for its consideration and transmittal to NOAA leadership.

The EISWG used this proactive process in fall 2018 to review the use of Observing Systems Simulation Experiences (OSSE) within NOAA, a prominent topic in the Weather Act. This has resulted in a report with several recommendations that was forwarded to the SAB in April 2019. The SAB subsequently reviewed the report and transmitted it to NOAA leadership in May 2019. The EISWG OSSE report with its recommendations is at Attachment 1. N.B.: A slightly modified version of this report has been submitted to the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society for publication.

As of this writing, EISWG has received four of the reports NOAA is required to deliver to the Congress under the Weather Act. One of these is the “Report to Congress – Tornado Warning Improvement and Extension Program Plan.” The EISWG has reviewed this report and developed a number of recommendations for NOAA’s consideration. The review and recommendations were forwarded in early July 2019 to the NOAA Science Advisory Board for its review and transmittal to NOAA leadership. A copy of the EISWG’s review and recommendations is at Attachment 2.

**On behalf of the members of the EISWG,**

John T. Snow

EISWG Co-Chair, and Dean Emeritus and Regents’ Professor  
Emeritus of Meteorology, The University of Oklahoma,  
Norman, OK

Brad Colman

EISWG Co-Chair, and Director of Weather Strategy, Bayer Crop  
Sciences - The Climate Corporation, Seattle, WA

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Attachments:

- 1) An EISWG review and recommendations on the use of Observing Systems Simulation Experiences (OSSE) within NOAA.
- 2) An EISWG review and recommendations concerning the “Report to Congress – Tornado Warning Improvement and Extension Program Plan.”