

**NOAA Science Advisory Board
Teleconference on the
Options for Developing a National Climate Service Report
May 18, 2009**

Presentations for this meeting will be posted on the SAB website at
<http://www.sab.noaa.gov/Meetings/meetings.html>

Meeting Attendees

SAB members in attendance: Dr. David Fluharty, Chair and Wakefield Professor of Ocean and Fishery Sciences, School of Marine Affairs, University of Washington; Mr. Raymond Ban, Executive Vice President, The Weather Channel; Michael Keebaugh, Vice President, Raytheon Company (retired); Dr. Frank Kudrna, President and CEO, Kudrna & Associates, Ltd.; Dr. James Mahoney, Environmental Consultant; Dr. James Sanchirico, Associate Professor, Environmental Science and Policy, University of California at Davis; Dr. Carolyn Thoroughgood, Vice Provost for Research, University of Delaware; Dr. Gerald Wheeler, Executive Director Emeritus, National Science Teachers Association; Dr. Thomas Zacharia, Associate Laboratory Director, Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

NOAA senior management and Line Office representatives in attendance: Mary Glackin, Deputy Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere; Mary Kicza, Assistant Administrator, National Environmental Satellite Data and Information Service; Charles Baker, Deputy Assistant Administrator, National Environmental Satellite Data and Information Service; Craig Mclean, Deputy Assistant Administrator for Programs and Administration, Oceanic and Atmospheric Research; Chester Koblinsky, Director of Climate Program Office, Oceanic and Atmospheric Research; Thomas Karl, Lead, NOAA Climate Services.

Staff for the SAB in attendance: Cynthia J. Decker, Executive Director; and Donavan Wilson

Call to Order:

After the call to order, David Fluharty gave a brief introduction to the teleconference. The purpose of this meeting is for the Science Advisory Board to provide a final review of the Climate Working Group (CWG) report *Options for Developing a National Climate Service*.

Review of the CWG process and changes since March 2009

Eric Barron, who chaired the Coordinating Committee on this effort for the CWG, led the discussion regarding the Working Group process with respect to changes to the report since the 9-10 March 2009 SAB meeting. After the March SAB meeting, the version of the report reviewed and commented on by the Board was revised as per CWG member inputs.

Antonio Busalacchi, Chair of the CWG, had solicited comments on the report from the members prior to the March SAB meeting but responses from the members were not all received soon enough before the SAB meeting to be addressed by Dr. Barron and the Tiger Teams. The remaining outstanding comments from comments from the Climate Working Group members in March were also addressed. Dr. Barron reviewed most major comments regarding the report prior to this teleconference and addressed most of them in oral comments. He provided in a separate document a summary of his revisions and identified the comments that he was not able to address and the reasons for this. Dr. Barron's summary statement is as follows:

(1) CONCERN: The CWG was concerned that some elements of the charge weren't addressed - most specifically an implementation plan associated with the options - one sentence of the charge says that we will take specific sector needs and follow through with an implementation to inform the option selection. In my view, we couldn't do this because each tiger team didn't have the same sectors represented and at a sufficient level to do a credible job of comparing each option in the same way.

ACTION: A preface has been written saying what this report accomplished and what it didn't.

(2) CONCERN: In addition, the same case could be made that we failed to delineate the role of specific agencies in each option (this proved to be very difficult because agencies did not want to commit at this stage).

ACTION: This point has also been addressed in the as an area that is yet to be accomplished.

(3) CONCERN: The CWG wanted an executive summary that had findings and recommendations in an NRC style.

ACTION: An executive summary in the recommended format was completed.

(4) CONCERN: The CWG was unhappy with the case study examples – feeling that they were *USA Today* like, lacked references, and more specifically lacked any real sense of the what, who the decision makers were, and what their needs were.

ACTION: We considered expansion of these case studies, but they were already one third of the report length and their objective was only to give a sense of the value, breadth and importance of the Service not to describe the elements of the Service. So, we decided to shorten this text, but be more explicit about the societal objective, decisions needed, decision-makers, and climate service required. Also, some headings were very general and others specific. The headings are now all general, and specific examples are cited in the text under the headings. Steering group members have endorsed this approach.

(5) CONCERN: Members of the CWG cited many specific concerns. Many could not be examined. For example, one reviewer asked why we did not consider a data portal as one of the Options. This would have required us to include options not part of the charge, and compare them with the 12 guidelines from the Vail meeting. In addition, every option probably should have a data portal. It is probably not worth addressing each suggestion and action in this email.

ACTION: We did our best to clarify items or change items as suggested by the CWG. We did not address all issues. Similar issues raised by the SAB (e.g., delete mention of a "hiatus") have also been completed.

(6) CONCERN: Members of the CWG cited some of the key recommendations for some vagueness (my word) - this is an area where I went back to the committee to ask for clarification.

ACTION: Responses to these comments are given in (a), (b), and (c) below.

a) We say that the NCS should have leadership "within the Federal System at the highest level possible." We were asked what this means and why we didn't just say it - cabinet level or other option. This is a case where we didn't want to prescribe something for the new administration given the fact that it is still unclear how climate will be organized. The group still does not want to be more specific.

b) We say that it should have "an independent budget large enough to influence the direction of the service." Again, it was suggested that this was vague and not particularly useful. I don't know how to put a number on it at this stage. One member said "at least 200M" and another said "large but not large enough to hurt other programs." Again, we didn't want to say. We know there are plans for NOAA's FY10 budget - for us to underestimate this or be very different from NOAA's request could actually cause problems. At any rate, we didn't change it.

c) We say that a federated structure (i.e., non-profit or federation) serves as the best interface to promote diverse connections to users. The reviewers stated that some federations are better than others in this regard. We believe the text indicates that the non-profit is stronger on this point than a federal federation. But, we also have a lot of example non-profits (TVA, Federal Crop Insurance Corp, Public Radio, Smithsonian, UCAR) that are very different. We could add examples, but we didn't investigate them. I am a little uncomfortable saying a UCAR model would be best given my position. I did not get an indication from the steering committee that we should change this.

(7) CONCERN: A couple of CWG members thought the lack of international focus was an omission. We agree, but none of the guidelines brought this to the fore. I believe this was a mistake from the Vail guidance. We did include it in many areas (international treaties, global security example) but there is no section on international role/implementation.

ACTION: The lack of international focus is now addressed in the preface, so that it is clear that this is also something left to do.

Dr. Barron concluded by stating that he believed he had addressed the majority of the primary CWG concerns and many of the specific ones. There is still much to do for implementation of a national climate service, however.

Dr. Busalacchi discussed the CWG's perspective on the current version of the report. First, he indicated that the CWG fully supports this version of the report. The Executive Summary

improves upon language in this report. He also mentioned the World Climate Summit that will convene in six months. This will be an important opportunity to discuss the international aspects of a climate service that were not addressed in this report.

Dr. Fluharty congratulated the CWG regarding its contributions to this report. One member mentioned his concerns regarding misinterpretations of the report. He believes the media has already misrepresented the report's findings, indicating that it endorses a specific model for the National Climate Service. Dr. Barron and Dr. Busalacchi agreed that this is why it is important to finalize the report and make it available publicly. This issue should be covered in a transmittal letter that will accompany the report. Mary Glackin commented that this report is not an implementation plan. She believes this issue should be stated in a transmittal letter or memorandum as well. Both Dr. Fluharty and Dr. Barron agreed with this.

Another member asked Dr. Barron about this recent testimony in Congress. Dr. Barron testified in front of the House Subcommittee on Science and Technology on May 5, 2009 (Hearing title: *Expanding Climate Services at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA): Developing the National Climate Service* <http://science.house.gov/publications/Testimony.aspx?TID=1508>). He said there was no downside regarding his testimony. Currently there are four bills in the House of Representatives regarding a national climate service. The chair of the House Subcommittee wants to discuss the issue of a national climate service with Dr. Barron personally. Dr. Fluharty believes this indicates there is a very receptive audience regarding this issue.

There was no further discussion of the report. Ray Ban moved that the SAB accept the report and submit it to NOAA. James Sanchirico seconded the motion. All SAB members present on the call supported the motion.

Public Comments

There were no public comments presented at this meeting.

Ms. Glackin expressed NOAA's gratitude for all the hard work on the development of this report. Dr. Fluharty asked for a roll call of SAB members. The meeting was adjourned after the roll was called.

Action Items

Action 1: The SAB approved the Climate Working Group Report and will transmit it to NOAA with a letter containing information as per suggestions from the SAB members.

Action 2: NOAA will respond to the SAB Report *Options for Developing a National Climate Service* within one year from the date of its transmission to the agency.