



American Water Works
Association

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ASSOCIATION OF
METROPOLITAN
WATER AGENCIES

NACWA 
A CLEAR COMMITMENT TO AMERICA'S WATERS

 Water Environment
Federation
the water quality people®

June 27, 2025

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC
20510

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC
20510

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chair
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC
20515

The Honorable Grace Meng
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC
20515

Chairs Moran and Rogers and Ranking Members Van Hollen and Meng:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing drinking water and wastewater utilities across the country, we respectfully urge you to fund the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) consistent with fiscal year (FY) 2025 levels, \$645.729 million, in the FY 2026 Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies appropriations bill.

OAR provides essential data, models, and decision-support tools that inform water utilities' work to provide a reliable water supply, prepare for disasters, and prevent the worst effects from droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events. We are deeply concerned about proposed funding reductions to NOAA's research and operations programs. These cuts, if enacted, would undermine vital programs that water utilities depend on to deliver affordable and reliable drinking, storm, and wastewater services to millions of Americans.

OAR programs provide data, models, and services that are critical to water utility operations and long-term planning. These tools help water utilities predict and plan for water availability, prepare for risks from flooding to water utility treatment plants and operations, and make decisions that are essential for ensuring a reliable supply of water to customers and businesses nationwide. The following OAR programs and initiatives are integral to water resource management, infrastructure reliability, and public safety across the country:

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1. Climate Program Office (CPO) contains various programs that are essential for water utility operations.

- The Modeling, Analysis, Predictions, and Projections (MAPP) Program advances predictive capabilities on seasonal to decadal scales. These processes support the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS), which water utilities of all sizes nationwide use to monitor, forecast, plan for droughts, and make critical decisions about water supply.
- Drought Early Warning Systems (DEWS) are regionally tailored systems that integrate forecasts, soil moisture, and precipitation outlooks to help local utilities and water managers respond to emerging drought conditions.
- Multi-Model Ensemble Forecasting improves the skill of precipitation and streamflow forecasts, critical for reservoir operations and drought contingency planning.
- Climate Adaptation Partnerships (CAP) help gather complex regional science into actionable guidance for local water utilities, municipalities, and watershed managers across regions. In the Southwest, the Western Water Assessment CAP worked with utilities like Denver Water, Southern Nevada Water Authority, and various other water systems to integrate snowpack decline and drought projections into long-term water supply planning. The South-Central CAP, partnering with Oklahoma and Texas utilities, developed drought risk tools and help systems create plans for potential multiyear dry conditions. Across all regions, CAPs have worked to efficiently use federal resources to promote public safety, water system reliability, and infrastructure resilience.

2. Weather Program Office (WPO)

- Supports hydrologic prediction and Subseasonal-to-Seasonal (S2S) forecasting research that is essential for managing water storage and delivery across large systems.
- Transitions innovations through the Joint Technology Transfer Initiative (JTTI) into operational tools used by water managers and the National Weather Service.

3. Physical Sciences Laboratory (PSL)

- Conducts foundational research into atmospheric rivers, snowpack variability, and precipitation extremes.
- Contributes to the development of tools like Hydrometeorological Testbeds, which water systems use to evaluate and refine flood and drought forecasting techniques.

4. NOAA Office of Water Prediction (OWP) (*through National Weather Service, supported by OAR research*)

- Operates the Atlas 15 program, which develops models for precipitation intensity and is critical for the planning and development of local drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, as well as other forms of public and private infrastructure.

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- Operates the National Water Model, a high-resolution hydrologic model that provides real-time and forecasted streamflow data across the continental U.S.
- Critical for flood response, infrastructure protection, and daily water operations.

NOAA OAR services are essential for ensuring that water utilities can efficiently and reliably provide drinking, storm, and wastewater services to American families and businesses. Investments in NOAA OAR:

- Streamline nationwide data compilation, reducing duplicative efforts of individual utilities and maximizing efficiency by centralizing data analysis and modeling;
- Help prevent costly infrastructure failures and reduce federal disaster spending;
- Support proactive drought management to safeguard long-term water supply needs and ensure sufficient availability of clean drinking water;
- Bolster economic stability by ensuring reliability of water supply;
- Aid in homeland security by ensuring continuity of services and emergency response capabilities for critical water infrastructure and services.

Water utilities, along with federal, state, and local agencies, rely on NOAA OAR to make data-informed decisions, allocate resources efficiently, and protect life and property. As threats from extreme weather increases, the demand for accurate federal data services will remain essential. We appreciate your ongoing leadership and respectfully urge you to maintain level funding for NOAA OAR in FY 2026 appropriations.

Sincerely,

American Water Works Association

Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies

National Association of Clean Water Agencies

Water Environment Federation