

April 29, 2025

Howard W. Lutnick  
Secretary of Commerce  
U.S. Department of Commerce  
Herbert Clark Hoover Building  
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Honorable Russell Vought  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
Eisenhower Executive Office Building  
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20503

Dear Secretary Lutnick and Director Vought,

We write to demonstrate our support for the important role of federal-university partnerships within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to protect and advance the nation's economic and national security priorities. These critical programs extend across the agency, including OAR, NESDIS, NOS, NMFS, and NWS, including numerous university-NOAA partnerships within OAR. We urge continued investment to maintain efforts across NOAA's robust portfolio of research programs, all of which benefit the public and industry across the U.S. In particular, we want to highlight NOAA's Cooperative Institutes (CIs), which are located at our institutions.

The CI programs, executed in partnership with universities and research organizations, deliver essential services in support of NOAA's mission in communities across the United States. We strongly urge continued federal investment in these vital, efficient, and effective CI programs.

NOAA and the nation depend on the cutting-edge science provided by OAR research programs. NOAA OAR conducts research internally, through its network of research laboratories and field programs in states like Oklahoma, Florida, and Michigan, as well as extramurally, through its meaningful partnerships with academic and non-profit research institutions. This research helps states and communities across the U.S. strategically manage their infrastructure, agriculture and ranching, fisheries and water resources, natural disaster planning and response, and recreation and tourism industries.

The national network of 16 Cooperative Institutes involves more than 80 U.S. universities and research institutions across 33 states. The CIs play a critical role in advancing scientific innovation, fostering vital partnerships across sectors, training the next generation of scientists, and delivering essential services that support NOAA's mission to improve public safety and well-being, enhance the research-to-operations pipeline, provide reliable forecast capabilities, and effectively manage our resources. In doing so, it fuels prosperity and benefits Americans at the individual, local, state, and

national levels. Given their broad impact, the CIs have garnered strong bipartisan support in Congress for decades and are relied upon by federal, state, and local governments as well as the private sector for essential data and research.

NOAA's CIs are a unique and highly effective model of collaboration between federal agencies and academic institutions. This model maximizes the return on federal investments and fosters cost-effective, high-impact research that benefits the American public, bolsters public safety, and enhances U.S. global competitiveness.

CIs are an innovative and highly efficient investment because they leverage the existing infrastructure, expertise, and networks of universities and research institutions to amplify the impact of taxpayer dollars. The work of the CIs is non-duplicative and necessary to providing the nation's weather forecasts, data, and public safety information. The efficiencies provided by the CIs are clear: they help maximize resource use, expand NOAA's capabilities in a cost-effective way, leverage additional resources through external funding, and ensure the agency can effectively carry out its mission, serving the interests of all Americans.

Furthermore, the CIs play an essential role in improving the safety, security, and prosperity of the American people by addressing critical issues such as severe weather, agricultural conditions, ocean and fishery systems. For example:

- CIs contribute to weather data collection and process model development and monitoring, and improvement of early warning systems for natural disasters such as severe storms, hurricanes, floods, and wildfires that collectively safeguard communities across the U.S.
- CIs provide an understanding of the natural resources available across our nation's lands and waters. Through ocean exploration, hydrology research, forecasting, and great lakes observations, the CIs are key to unlocking future resources.
- CIs provide vital research on ocean systems in the Gulf of America to address risks that threaten local economies and public health.
- CIs monitor ocean conditions, sea level rise, and temperature fluctuations, providing invaluable data for decision-making in infrastructure, disaster response, agriculture, and other planning.

The research and data generated by these institutes have a tangible impact on communities and industries across the nation. From weather forecasting in the Midwest to mitigating the economic impacts of hurricanes in the Southeast, the CIs enhance public safety, support the economy, and foster informed decision-making at all levels of government and industry.

By ensuring the continuation of funding for NOAA research programs including the CIs at no less than FY 2024 levels through the remainder of FY 2025 and in FY 2026, you are investing in cost-effective, high-impact programs that deliver substantial benefits to the American people, to our national security, and to our economic prosperity. We strongly encourage you to continue this critical funding.

We look forward to a continued successful partnership with NOAA to serve the interests of the American people in FY 2025, FY 2026, and beyond. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Sincerely,



Todd Saliman  
President, University of  
Colorado



Justin Schwartz  
Chancellor, University of  
Colorado Boulder



Waleed Abdalati  
Director, Cooperative  
Institute for Earth System  
Research and Data  
Sciences (CIESRDS)  
University of Colorado  
Boulder



Anthony A. Frank  
Chancellor, Colorado State  
University



Amy Parsons  
President, Colorado State  
University



Steven Miller  
Director, Cooperative  
Institute for Research in the  
Atmosphere (CIRA)  
Colorado State University



Jayathi Murthy  
President, Oregon State University



Francis Chan, PhD  
Director, Cooperative Institute for Marine  
Ecosystem and Resources Studies  
Associate Professor, Department of  
Integrative Biology  
Oregon State University

Wendy Hensel  
President, University of Hawaii

Doug Luther  
Director, Joint Institute for Marine and  
Atmospheric Research (JIMAR)  
University of Hawaii

Darryll Pines  
President, University of Maryland

Lars Peter Riishojgaard  
Director, Cooperative Institute for Satellite  
Earth System Studies (CISESS)  
University of Maryland

Joseph Harroz, Jr.  
President, University of Oklahoma

Greg McFarquhar  
Cooperative Institute for Severe and High-  
Impact Weather Research and  
Operations (CIWRO)  
University of Oklahoma

Marc B. Parlange  
President, University of Rhode Island

Adam Soule  
Director, Ocean Exploration Cooperative  
Institute (OCEI)  
University of Rhode Island

Ana Mari Cauce  
President, University of Washington

John Horne  
Director, Cooperative Institute for Climate,  
Ocean, and Ecosystem Studies (CICOES)  
University of Washington



Peter de Menocal  
President & Director, Woods Hole  
Oceanographic Institution



Donald Anderson  
Director, The North Atlantic Region  
(CINAR)  
Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution

Cc: Laura Grimm, Acting Under Secretary for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA  
Administrator