



**Briefing on Congressional Appropriations for National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Climate Change Research**

**Background**

The California Water Commission has historically made recommendations for federal appropriations on matters of interest to California water management. The Congressional appropriations committees are beginning their work on the federal Fiscal Year (FY) 2013 budget, and letters from the Commission would now be timely.

For many years, DWR staff has been working with several universities and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) on projects including climate and weather programs. Proposed federal funding reductions would impact these activities. DWR staff has drafted a letter for Commission consideration that urges support for these climate and weather programs in the NOAA FY 2013 budget.

Understanding and adapting to climate change is a high priority for California. Additionally, operating water supply and flood control projects requires use of federally developed climate and weather data and information products. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is the primary federal agency responsible for weather and climate science and research and the collection, analysis, and dissemination of weather and climate information. In FY 2012, the President's Budget Request had proposed a budget-neutral reorganization of NOAA climate programs that the Congress rejected, and substantial cuts were made to climate and weather programs. DWR is requesting that the Commission express its support to restore funding for important climate and weather programs in NOAA's budget.

A draft letter with recommendations for climate and weather programs in the NOAA FY 2013 budget has been provided to the Commission. These recommendations are:

1. Support an increase of \$7.7 million over the President's FY 2013 budget for the Hydrometeorological Testbed (HMT) program funded within the Office of Atmospheric Research (OAR). The proposed increase is the same level proposed in the original FY 2011 President's budget; the program was cut in FY 2012 as part of general Congressional reductions in the NOAA climate budget. HMT is one of the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) highest priorities within OAR. The program has been working in California since the mid-2000s to develop and install a 21<sup>st</sup> century hydrometeorological instrumentation network for forecasting severe storms and extreme precipitation. DWR has funded \$10 million in state instrumentation as part of the program, and the California Energy Commission is contributing funding toward the atmospheric research. Based on the success of the California project, NOAA researchers and

the Western States Water Council have prepared a strategy document to expand this observing system to other Western states, an expansion that would include offshore monitoring valuable to California.

2. Support the President's Budget Request for NOAA's Office of Atmospheric Research (OAR) climate research, observations, and regional information line item. In the enacted FY 2012 budget, Congress cut about \$30 million from this \$150 million program. The FY 2013 President's request would restore the program to historical levels. A letter from Governor Jerry Brown to the Office of Management and Budget supporting this restoration is attached. This program supports a wide range of activities including ocean and atmosphere monitoring activities, university research, and climate modeling. Activities within the line item particularly important to DWR include the university-based Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments program and the National Integrated Drought Information System program.
3. Support the enacted FY 2012 budget amount (about \$7 million) for NOAA's university-based Regional Climate Centers (RCCs), which compile, analyze, and distribute weather and climate-related data. The FY 2013 President's budget proposes a cut of \$1 million and redirection of some remaining funds to other purposes. The RCCs have historically been supported primarily by congressional write-ins; they have a long history of successfully working with end users of climate and weather data. DWR works closely with the Western RCC in Reno, and relies on that office for data support for State Climatologist activities.
4. Support the enacted FY 2012 budget for the National Weather Service's (NWS) Cooperative Observer Network, a network of weather stations operated by volunteer observers with equipment provided by NWS. The historical budget for modernizing this aging network has been \$3-4 million annually; the FY 2013 President's budget proposes a reduction of \$0.9 million. The co-op network's value lies in the long period of record of many of its stations and their better coverage of the western U.S. than that of other weather observing networks. DWR uses co-op station data in its State Climatologist program.

A representative from DWR will be available to brief the Commission on NOAA's weather and climate budget.

#### **Attachments**

Draft Commission Letter in support of NOAA funding  
Letter from Jerry Brown to the Office of Management and Budget

#### **Contact**

Sue Sims  
Executive Officer  
California Water Commission  
Phone: (916) 653-5544