

Comments on “Proposed Clarification to NOAA’s Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information” Posted August 4, 2005

	Comment
1	<p>There should be no restrictions whatsoever on how the National Weather Service (NWS) can package and distribute taxpayer-funded weather data to the public. Private weather companies are complaining that they are being hurt by NWS decisions to value-add taxpayer funded weather data and distribute it to the public. This may be the case, but also they must realize that the private weather industry is receiving a massive government subsidy in the form of weather data, computer models, etc. It is provided to them way below what it cost the government to produce it. I know of a 24 hour 'all weather' cable network here in Atlanta that frequently use NWS model data from the public internet instead of the value added data from a private weather company. Whose fault is that? Here's a proposal... Let the private weather companies be responsible for the nearly \$800 million budget of the NWS minus any budget items diectly related to public warnings, etc. Then, the private weather companies would own the data enabling them to do whatever they want to with the data!</p>
2	<p>Please do not restrict any offerings. We're paying taxes, we deserve all results. Thank you.</p>
3	<p>How can the direct distribution of weather to the american people not be part of your mandate? How can I as a tax payer understand paying for your existance, only to have you turn around and give it away to someone who wants to charge me for the same information I already paid for? I say full steam ahead, fill my world with weather! -Greg Kuhlman Cedar Rapids, Iowa</p>
4	<p>The NOAA is part of the government. The government works for the people. Since there are no security concerns involved, the people should have access to the data that the NOAA gathers. There is no need to restrict public access to that data. There is plenty of room for private enterprise to present that data in a way that adds value for consumers. If free tools exist that are as good as those produced by private enterprise, that encourages corporations to innovate. This provides the maximal benefit to the public good: the users of free services have access to the data, and the userse of the for-profit services enjoy the improvements that must be made to be more valuable than the free services. Think of it as the business equivalent of "you must be at least this tall in order to ride on this roller coaster".</p>
5	<p>Weather information gathered by government funded (taxpayer)techniques is best left open to the public. Weather information can be of crucial importance to many individuals. Allowing private companies to charge for this information in whatever form, would be equal to paying twice. Private companies trying to cash in on public information is similar in my mind to allowing a large upleasant man to charge an entrance fee to a public library.</p>
6	<p>My tax money should not be used to enhance the profitability of a private enterprise. Please leave NOAA as is, status quo. As a pilot, I expect to have presentations of the weather and other environmental information my tax money has collected straight from the source, NOAA, and without wasting my time or bandwidth on advertising and certainly without costing me additional money to access data my taxes already paid for. NOAA should be for civilian as well as for military/nuclear dual use and teh data should be unabridged.</p>

	<p>I also respectfully request that Rick Santorum gets a mental exam. He represents the citizens of this country, not Accuweather.</p>
7	<p>I'm completely opposed to the proposed policy change. As a taxpayer, I'm already paying NOAA to produce & disseminate critical weather information. I don't want to have to pay a third party again to get the same information. I understand that Sen. Santorum's constituents might make more money if only the government would let them resell this information, but I could care less about their financial outlook. I care very much, by contrast, about continuing to receive the best possible data from NOAA.</p>
8	<p>I think it is wrong to make us (the taxpayers) pay for this information twice. Our tax dollars pay for the gathering of this information and it should be disseminated back to us in the most efficient means possible. Forcing us to pay a third party company to format the information and give it back to us is ridiculous.</p>
9	<p>NOAA serves the purpose of the public interest and safety. Given the advent of technology in all areas of scientific gathering and ease of electronic dissemination of such information, NOAA is at a zenith of informing the individual citizens. It is not contradictory or competitive in a free society for a public concern to continue this practice while also supporting any non-public outlets of information. Multiple and redundant outlets of information is to be encouraged for safety and should not be diminished.</p>
10	<p>I am not opposed to this change, so far as it doesn't reduce public access to government provided weather information at all. The truth is that the NWS has driven some recent improvement in the private sector. NWS imagery available on the internet is far better than most private imagery, yet I still often use private imagery for it's easy-to-read graphical interpretation. Certainly a statistical study such as weather benefits greatly from more data points, a fact critics of the NWS public accessibility would be wise to consider.</p>
11	<p>I believe that if the information is gathered with public money it was paid for by the public and it belongs to the public.</p> <p>The American tax payers should have free and unfettered access to the information that NOAA can provide.</p> <p>I do not want to be held hostage to antiquated technology companies like Weather.com or Accuweather.com who require me to be exposed to what ever spyware or tracking tool they wish to impose in trade for me having access to the data that I now can receive free of exposure to spy or hacking or tracking software. No commercial vendor can offer me the data that NOAA has with out doing something that generates them revenue. These sites that provide me not extra value to the NOAA data but only repackage the NOAA data have to do one of the following things to prove to their advertisers the usage of the site:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use zero bite gif that send tracking information to companies like WebTrends (or what used to be called WebTrends) 2. Use spyware 3. Do expensive mining of web server logs along with bite code injection to track my path during a visit. <p>Today I can avoid the privacy and security risks of the 1st two options by using the NOAA, publicly funded site.</p> <p>For my neighborhood portal (that is free and is voluntarily supported and does not contain advertising or any spyware/addware/malware and does not do any form of tracking) today uses the information free from the NOAA site to provide weather data on its site.</p> <p>I do not believe that what NOAA has been providing competes with the commercial weather</p>

	<p>providers. I believe that if you stick to the American principle that what is paid for by the public belongs to the public that NOAA will force the commercial weather providers to actually have to work for a living and produce a Value-Add service.</p> <p>Like the US Patten Office website and the EDGAR site have proven is that American's should not have to pay a 3rd party to give them access to what their tax payer money had funded. The 3rd party companies that used to just resell the data from these to agencies with no value-add have had to now work for a living and create value-add to justify their pay checks.</p> <p>In the past were the data had to be received in paper based formats or proprietary data formats going through 3rd parties was justified as they spent their time and money to create a method for the data to be consumed.</p> <p>In today's world NOAA's ability to provide its data in a format that anyone with Internet access and a web browser can consume does not justify the barring access to only a few companies like Weather.com or AccuWeather.</p> <p>As companies also pay taxes, I don't believe that limiting the free access to the NOAA data to individuals and non-profits to be consistent. Keep it the way it is today and allow free access to anyone.</p> <p>What is paid for should be delivered and do not allow companies like Weather.com or AccuWeather to hold data for ransom to the American tax payers.</p>
12	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>Please do not decrease or change the way weather data provided.</p> <p>As an American taxpayer, the data created by NOAA via taxpayer money should be freely available to all taxpayers, and not just corporations who have good lobbyists.</p> <p>I should not have to be subjected to dozens of pop-up ads, or flashing banners when I wish to see if it is going to rain.</p> <p>The NOAA webpage provides myself and many others with a quick, accurate view of current weather conditions.</p> <p>If the current technology, research and development allows NOAA to present weather data in an easy to use format for the public so be it.</p> <p>If anyone should change, it should be those corporations located in Ohio who should change to meet the changing way people get the weather information they need, without the delay or ads.</p> <p>The taxpayers of the United States have paid for this information once; we should not have to pay for it a second time if we so choose.</p> <p>Keep NOAA's Environmental Information, free, open and easy to use.</p> <p>Respectfully Submitted</p> <p>Gene Rampale Jr. Lindenhurst, IL</p>
13	<p>To me it is quite simple. I paid for the Nexrad system. It belongs to the people of the United States. The fact that in order to receive real time or near real time access to that data I would have to subscribe and pay for that service is ridiculous. I recently was overlaying Intellicast's .gif imagery on top of my Google Earth screen when it suddenly stopped working. I went to Intellicast's website to look at the HTML source and they had switched the image's filename to "you are stealing from intellicast.gif" First of all... even if it was their imagery to start with, I was only looking at it in a different window, which is not stealing, but what disturbed me the most about the idea, is that it is MY IMAGERY. It belongs to all of us, and since I use it to enhance the safety of my family and am not remarketing it in any way there should be no problem at all with it. I know this is only one tiny example, but I am seriously concerned that the Santorum Bill would basically make it possible for SOME private companies to monopolize and profit from systems</p>

	<p>that we as taxpayers created and funded for the promotion of the general welfare of our communities. Intellicast is a good example of someone who has added value to the raw data Nexrad can provide by repackaging it in a quality fashion. However, I still feel that the raw data used is OURS, and private sector entities have no right to deny me access to the same data as provided via the National Weather Service or NOAA. I think the Weather Service should be allowed to provide as much innovatively packaged information as any private weather service. It is a matter of public safety if nothing else. We need REALTIME access to Nexrad imagery, 15 minutes, the average delay for such imagery, is enough to cause loss of life during severe weather. It also boosts our economy when there is a free flow of information and data.</p>
14	<p>I understand the value of widely disseminated weather information and recognize that most people will receive that information via commercial sources such as the Weather Channel or weatherbug.com. I do believe, however, that as NOAA is a public agency, paid for with public dollars, that the information should be made available to the public. The examples used during the debate, using flash for example, are good methods of providing weather and safety information. The responsibility of NOAA is to the public, not to business interests. Personally, I think they should have to pay for the information that they turn around and sell.</p>
15	<p>I don't believe the NOAA should be swayed at all by what the "private sector" believes should be provided to the American public. In my mind, the only "critical role played by the private sector in the environmental information enterprise as a whole" is to make money.</p> <p>As a tax paying and voting American citizen, I no longer trust the "private sector" to provide me with the most accurate and informing weather data.</p> <p>When you say "NOAA will take advantage of existing capabilities and services of commercial and academic sectors to avoid duplication and competition in areas not related to the NOAA mission", you are saying you don't believe competition is healthy. The Post Office has had to compete with many other carriers over the years and their service has vastly improved because of it.</p> <p>The NOAA should not stop providing any services and should venture out to produce and provide as many new innovative services as possible.</p> <p>Leave the "Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information"</p>
16	<p>I do not wish to see the NOAA budge from its current policy, and 'clarifications' of this source are neither desirable nor beneficial for US citizens. The NOAA should stand up to the pressure from the honorable Senator from Pennsylvania and continue to work in its present useful, beneficial capacity - and the private market should compete on its own merits, not by causing the NOAA to wuss out.</p>
17	<p>The biggest change in the clarification appears to be the sentence "NOAA will take advantage of existing capabilities and services of commercial and academic sectors to avoid duplication and competition in areas not related to the NOAA mission."</p> <p>It would seem to me that this policy could prevent the NOAA from providing services that are in the public's interest, if such services are also available from commercial sources. If the commercial interests fear competition from the government agency that collects most of the information in the first place, it implies that they are not "adding value," in business parlance; instead it would appear they are trying to hoard information that was collected at public expense for the public good.</p> <p>Private enterprise deserves no such protection and I urge you to retain the existing wording rather than adopting this clarification.</p>
18	<p>I do not like the idea as I understand it, that I will be paying a private company for information that is already avail from you. If the private company can not survive without this policy then they</p>

	should be out of business
19	<p>My tax money paid for the data and everything used to collect, collate and analyze it. Therefore, I should be able to access and use it directly, as I would be able to with any other data collected by the Federal government -- WITHOUT having to pay a third party such as AccuWeather. You don't have to pay a third party to get Census data, so why should this be true for weather data?</p> <p>I will support NO changes to current law, and I particularly despise Senator Rick Santorum's proposed changes in the matter. I don't think it's coincidental that AccuWeather resides within Sen. Santorum's district.</p>
20	<p>For years I have used the NWS as my primary and usually sole source of weather information. During this time the presentation quality has improved greatly. Any change to NOAA policy that would curtail the NWSs abilities would be a tremendous disservice to the American people. Let the commercial services compete on their own merits not through legislation or policy change.</p>
21	<p>NOAA should continue to publish its data to the public for free. We've paid for it so we should get it without additional charges.</p>
22	<p>I am disappointed, to say the least, to see yet another private interest group dictate the policies of our government (as if the President's energy policy weren't bad enough). I currently appreciate the wealth of information available from NOAA at no direct cost to me (yes, I know my taxes help pay for it). NOAA is collecting weather data and disseminating the information better many private businesses, and are able to keep us all better informed about our environment. The private interests pushing for these changes appear to be more interested in making a buck off everything than what is truly good for the public. I realize you're not taking a vote, but I would definitely be against these proposed changes.</p>
23	<p>This is an outrage...and certain safety risk for people in areas of recreation and business, mainly aviation and maritime.</p> <p>The federal Government provides many services that compete with the private sector--where does Rick Santorum plan to stop?</p> <p>Mike Weiss College Park-MD</p>
24	<p>A partnership with private and non-profit groups in dissemination of weather information is fine. However, both the government and third parties should recognize that the base for all data being disseminated results from the expenditure of taxpayer money, and that the public should have a right to general weather information without having to go to, through, or pay a third party.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to comment.</p> <p>Dale M. Putnam Olympia, WA</p>
25	<p>Since NOAA is an Organization of our U.S. Government, Private entities should not be allowed to interfere with it's Reporting of Weather Information to the Public, who in large Finances it. The power of the Internet is great and for those of us who have Internet Connectivity, Why shouldn't we be able to get the same information on current Weather as Private Entities? It's OK for them to report Weather but why should the Public be FORCED to Rely on Them? I would hope that NOAA would continue to provide the PUBLIC with as much Weather Information as possible, and even Archives so that Common People could get either current or Archived weather Data for educational purposes. I have had many cases where I would have liked to look up weather information for a specific date in helping my children with a school project, yet was unable to find</p>

	<p>such information. No need to try and call the Weather Man at the Local TV Station, It is Impossible to contact anyone there. Please do not Restrict Weather Information to the Public via NOAA on the Internet nor Radio.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Sandy Bryson Quality Computer & Communications</p>
26	<p>Plainly and simply: My tax dollars already pay for NOAA. Therefor NOAA should provide me with related weather information etc as they see fit, without worrying whether some private third party whose business model is not all it's cracked up to be will be upset.</p>
27	<p>I think it is important that raw data is available to the public, so that those who wish to write their own processing programs may do so (I use the RSS feeds currently.)</p> <p>It is also critical to remind commercial enterprises who are selling government-provided data that the consumers (at least in the USA) have paid for the data once already through taxation, so they are not in a position to dictate to the NOAA how the data can be disseminated.</p> <p>The "value-add" in presenting weather data is in the presentation itself. If the commercial enterprises cannot succeed by adding value, they should not be allowed to succeed by cutting off open access to the data itself.</p>
28	<p>I believe that the NWS should continue to innovate and provide whatever information it can. The commercial providers should not look to the courts for protection, but look to new innovation</p>
29	<p>I resent being charged twice for information that was paid for with my taxes. Several years ago, the NWS ran a very good website with county level conditions and forecast information. It was quick and easy to use and did not subject the user to annoying ads and limited information.</p> <p>Giving private companies this information so they can charge the public is basically corporate welfare. They whine about value added services, but the reality is that they don't add value, just advertisements or fees.</p>
30	<p>As a tax-payer funded organization, it is the NOAA's duty to provide weather and climate data direct to taxpayers -- a service it has performed well since its inception.</p> <p>While I understand the desires of commercial businesses to charge fees for data gathered by NOAA -- I work for a company that posts NOAA data on its Web site (for free) -- it is encumbant upon the commercial businesses to either gather the data they wish to charge for, or to enhance it through their own proprietary means to develop a viable product to charge for. Merely preventing the NOAA from offering free weather products creates an artificial marketplace in which the commercial businesses can operate, but ignores the fact that consumers (tax payers) have funded the gathering of the weather data; thus consumers would be charged twice for access to that data: once in taxes, and again by the commercial businesses.</p> <p>If the commercial businesses were to fund the NOAA's data gathering activities, that would entitle the commercial businesses to "call the shots" and dictate when, where and how the data is distributed. But that is at the very least impractical (and unlikely), and is contrary to the NOAA's mission.</p> <p>My suggestion would be that the NOAA _increase_ the services it offers for free, to provide broader access to weather and climate data. Commercial businesses should consider themselves welcome to take the same NOAA data and attempt to build superior products that they can charge for, if they are able to find enough consumers who value their enhancements.</p> <p>But the NOAA should not back-down just to create a market when consumers are already footing the bill for the current weather and climate data. That fact dictates that consumers should have free access to that data, and that the NOAA should consider itself charged with making that data available in easily-accessed, easily-understood forms -- whatever those forms need to be based</p>

	<p>on current technology and how consumers wish to access it.</p> <p>I would be happy to provide additional information if necessary.</p> <p>Jason E. Scott Saco, Maine</p>
31	<p>To Whom It May Concern:</p> <p>I am a resident of coastal Florida, which as you are aware, is frequently subject to severe weather systems. During the 2004 hurricane season, I visited your Web site quite often to keep tabs on the four named storms which struck this state.</p> <p>Though I realize that much meteorological information is beyond the comprehension of laymen like myself, I feel strongly that ALL weather information gathered through tax dollars should be disseminated freely to anyone subject to taxation by the U.S. government and not merely to private weather services. Unlike parks or other government services that may charge a fee to supplement tax payer support, accurate weather information could be a matter of life or death.</p> <p>As for your "partners," it is up to businesses in the private sector to find a way to add value above and beyond what should be free to all, if they want to profit by offering weather information to the public.</p> <p>Therefore as a citizen, I would strongly object to curtailing the amount --- or timeliness --- of information that is now accessible at your Web site.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Jim Carroll Largo, FL</p>
32	<p>The writer is a retired computer applications engineer living in Brooklyn, NY, who grew up in Texas, served as a line officer in the US Navy, 1960-62, including 17 months as Meteorological Officer (among other duties such as CIC Officer, Operations Officer, Protestant Lay Leader, I&E Officer, etc.) on USS PROTECTOR(AGR-11), a radar picket ship serving NORAD's Soviet-bomber defense mission in the North Atlantic, with a secondary mission to provide weather(surface and radiosonde observations) and sea data (surface and BT observations) to the weather-forecasting services of the Navy and Air Force, who also provided them to the Weather Bureau.</p> <p>I believe that given that NOAA is government-funded, any and all information it acquires or generates from any sources should be available to any person who even thinks he/she can make use of it -- or is merely curious about the weather and climate. NOAA's information is public property and should not be denied to anyone in the commercial interests of its private-sector competitors (yes, competitors, not as is suggested, "partners") -- most of whom do a crappy job while pretending to be serious about something besides entertainment or hoodwinking their customers into thinking they have something useful to offer not available from the government. Their cries of improper competition from NOAA should be ignored; they should be told "go away and don't bother us".</p> <p>NOAA should distribute its PUBLIC information by any and all available means without reference to other providers. If other providers can make use of it, that would probably improve their "product"; but they should not be permitted to profit in any way by restricting NOAA from dissemination of PUBLICLY-OWNED information. There is no inherent legal</p>

	<p>or moral right to profit; rather, it is the reward for taking the risks of losing one's investment. Any action by government to reduce the risks is improper influence on the vaunted "market". Government's free -- or, in rare cases, at-cost -- dissemination of information it generates or acquires with taxpayer money is its bounden duty. Its failure to do so is a sell-out to private interests; those who perpetrate such a thing should be imprisoned at hard labor for the rest of their lives -- their action is just below treason, because it is, in effect, mis-appropriation or theft of property belonging to every citizen.</p> <p>The idea that private providers are in any way "partners" of government is the sort of proto-Nazi garbage I've come to expect from the current administration, which has their heads up their asses about this sort of thing as well as many others. The people who suggested this and any children they have raised should, in the meantime, be barred from holding any publicly elected or appointed office, or civil-service employment, at any level of government, for the rest of their lives. If I did not believe in the rights of citizenship, I'd suggest stripping their citizenship and their permanent banishment to someplace with the governmental philosophy of, say, the Saud family.</p> <p>I should be happy to expand upon these views if you care to contact me.</p> <p>Thanks for your attention.</p> <p>Stonewall J. McMurray, III ex-LT, USNR Brooklyn, NY</p>
33	<p>I fully support NOAA continuing to make weather information more easily accessible to the general public. Restricting access to information and services we pay for through our taxes so we have to pay again through commercial enterprises is not right. However, NOAA should be careful to not unfairly compete against commercial enterprises that provide value beyond easy accessibility to weather information on a multitude of devices.</p>
34	<p>It is the responsibility of the private sector to find value add and provide these added values to the public for a fee. It is NOT NOAA's responsibility to make sure it does not impeded the ability of a for profit venture by getting to the market first. For instance, if NOAA is/could provide wireless device distribution of marine weather forecasts, and no other for fee service currently exists to provide this information in this format, it should not stop NOAA from doing so. If at a later time the private firm can produce a value add to the consumer that makes it more effective and thus worthy of payment, good for them. NOAA should not be bound by what a private sector firm might be thinking of doing someday. On the other hand, if a private sector firm is already providing this service, then NOAA should not compete. but should perhaps influence the private company with customized data feeds or ??? to increase distribution by lowering price?</p> <p>Basically, NOAA should not limit what it sees as possible because of sensibility to the private sector, it should be driven by the need to provide weather information of a meaningful nature to the people of the world, no more, no less.</p>
35	<p>I applaud both NOAA and the commercial sector for their advances in environmental information gathering, organization, and dissemination. The data that has become available over the past years, thanks to NOAA's and the NWS's efforts, have served to increase awareness, knowledge, and even saved lives and livelihoods.</p> <p>The proposed clarification to NOAA's policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information seems to effectively address the concerns of NOAA becoming a competitor of commercial sources. NOAA's clearly stated intention is to provide environmental information, and not specifically to compete with private entities or commercial sources.</p>

	<p>I am deeply grateful for the information provided by NOAA and the NWS. I think their excellent work should continue, and politics be left out of their operations.</p> <p>Best regards, Jamie Tyndall Mechanicsburg, PA</p>
36	<p>My tax dollars are providing the infrastructure to generate the forecasts. I should not have to rely on a private sector (possible for pay) service for the distribution of the forecast.</p>
37	<p>This new statement is a better description of how the NWS relationship to the commercial services can work however, it should never be construed to restrict public access to the weather data and analysis that we the tax payers have paid for. The NWS should leave specialized services to individuals and groups such as special event forecasting to the commercial services and if the commercial services can deliver true added value to the NWS product it should not be duplicated.</p> <p>But the NWS must be allowed to continue to develop technology to deliver basic data and analysis to the general public without restriction.</p>
38	<p>To best serve the public's interest, please remember that not all private companies <u>should</u> survive--unless they are willing to adapt and develop new products which provide a real service.</p> <p>As technology improves, the best technology available should be used to disseminate government developed information. In the old days, it was paper charts and teletype. The charts were expensive to print, and the printing costs needed to be recouped.</p> <p>The internet has changed all of that. The cost of making information available to the public is very low on a per person basis.</p> <p>Private companies should be allowed to profit from this publicly funded information only to the extent that they provide a true "value add" that people are willing to pay for. They should not be allowed to just disseminate the information and charge a fee for it.</p> <p>Don Woodbridge Austin, TX</p>
39	<p>Regarding the Proposed Clarification to NOAA's "Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information," I respectfully request that NOAA continue to provide at least its current level of support for weather data provision, forecasting, both graphically and on a text basis.</p> <p>I am a frequent user of NOAA's data and forecasting products as well as various commercial services. Both of these sources are useful. NOAA is more useful from a safety standpoint, because of its long experience in what is necessary for safety to mariners, farmers, and others who are dependent on accurate forecasting information in their daily lives. As a former mariner I can only emphasize that the single most important resource to the safety of mariners is NOAA forecasting tools. Commercial services are far, far behind in their tools and abilities. More importantly, the ability to pay top dollar for routing and forecasting products should NOT determine who lives and who dies in a storm at sea.</p> <p>I also do not understand why NOAA would consider eliminating information whose costs are largely infrastructure based, and whose infrastructure has been paid for with tax revenue. If the Commercial Weather Service Industry can afford to repay all of the infrastructure costs that NOAA has incurred, including satellite placement and maintenance, radar station installation, construction and maintenance, and so on, and do it without a reduction in the availability of high quality, detailed forecasting and analysis products that would reduce the safety of weather dependent vocations and private persons, then of course it should be considered. My understanding is that NOAA exist because the private sector can not afford to reimburse all of those costs incurred over the past 30 years. If NOAA bows to the pressure exerted by these commercial groups and reduces the level of service to where mariners and others are forced to pay for the data and forecasting products, those mariners are being doubly taxed, since safe navigation REQUIRES mariners to use these products.</p>

	<p>Accordingly, I urge the NOAA to continue to provide an essential service that is relied on by hundreds of thousands, at least until the Commercial Weather services can profitably pay their share of infrastructure costs and deliver a similar high-quality service. Best Regards.</p> <p>Alan E. Block Biltmore Properties Corporation Troy, MI</p>
40	<p>This is bad policy. We already paid. We should not have to pay again. If these companies want to provide weather information, they can launch their own satellites.</p> <p>Regards,</p> <p>Rick Valdes Costa Mesa, CA.</p>
41	<p>I believe it is the NOAA's responsibility to make weather data products available to the public. Your data gathering and processing is funded by the taxpayer. Restricting access to the information you collect to commercial entities is unfair. The American people are not paying the government to collect weather data for private companies - we are paying the government to collect weather data for the American public. Private companies are free to add value to your weather data products and sell them in the marketplace, just as they are free to collect their own data directly. Competition is supposed to be a good thing, isn't it?</p>
42	<p>The idea that private enterprise should somehow be allowed to usurp a citizen's right to data produced with taxpayer funding is ridiculous. Santorum's bill is the most egregious example of "bought and paid for" special-interest legislation. I and my friends urge you to resist such nonsense completely. We believe that so long as taxpayer money is funding public research of any kind, the results should freely be made public. The government via NOAA has always made weather forecasting public and should continue such efforts without change.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
43	<p>My tax dollars are providing the infrastructure to generate the forecasts. I should not have to rely on a private sector (possibly for pay) service for the distribution of the forecast. It was submitted by Alan R Ouellette () on Tuesday, August 16, 2005 at 14:19:32</p>
44	<p>Please consider that your duty and loyalty are toward the American public. Not to corporate entities that claim you are competing with them. Claims of unfair competition companies are invalid.</p> <p>My tax dollars should come directly back to me. Not go to the benefit of a corporation that can charge me whatever it likes. Even if they claim to be benevolent, corporations are in it for the money.</p> <p>The public interest is BETTER served by the public sector providing services. This is exactly what government is for. I do not want a money-making organization in control of my safety!</p> <p>All information gathered by a government (i.e., tax) based organization is owned by the public (i.e. the tax payers). It should be completely open and shared by all. (With the obvious exception of some military secrets, etc.)</p> <p>Thanks for your time,</p> <p>Thomas Kellar Yellow Springs, Ohio</p>
45	<p>The NOAA weather web site is by far the best available. Please do not take any action to make it second rate. Herb Duke</p>

46	<p>I feel that the government should continue to disseminate it's information; and even continue to improve it's products and dissemination. If it adds competition to the private sector, so be it. That is how business evolves. It promotes innovation in the private sector. That is how many industries have had to operate. Brick and mortar stores have had to create online store fronts, etc. Industries continually evolve and change; hopefully bringing improvement.</p> <p>Being an avid outdoorsman, with many friends that partake in mountaineering, backcountry skiing/snowboarding, and other activities, the National Weather Service is of a particular importance to me. It can mean the difference between life and death if the correct information isn't obtained.</p> <p>Take care, A.J.</p>
47	<p>This is excellent, but could be strengthened by adding the paragraph within the clarification explanation into the body of Section 4. That paragraph reads:</p> <p>"NOAA is committed to open consultation with all who are affected by NOAA's services including the private sector. The American Meteorological Society has established a new Commission to foster constructive discussion within the enterprise as a whole. NOAA will use this and other appropriate mechanisms to consult openly on these matters as we move forward."</p> <p>The contents of this e-mail are confidential and pre-decisional Allan C. Eustis NIST Voting Systems Standards Gaithersburg , Md.</p>
48	<p>NOAA proposes clarifying Section 4 to state that NOAA will "take advantage of existing capabilities and services of commercial and academic sectors to avoid duplication and competition in areas not related to the NOAA mission."</p> <p>This WILL allow for more thoughtful consideration of expansions/changes in NOAA products/services where private and academic capabilities/services are already present, in areas NOT related to the current NOAA mission, thereby avoiding duplication and competition.</p> <p>However, this does NOT encourage NOAA to contract for products/services where NOAA DOES have a mission but should acquire these products/services from commercial or academic suppliers (i.e., via COTS sources).</p> <p>Therefore, I would suggest that the statement read:</p> <p>NOAA will "take advantage of existing capabilities and services of commercial and academic sectors to avoid duplication and competition in areas not related to the current NOAA mission, and in support of all improvements and expansions in NOAA's current mission."</p> <p>Dr. Greg Wilson President, Baron Advanced Meteorological Systems</p>
49	<p>Clear adherence to NOAA mission is important and should be sufficient to differentiate the needs of the public sector weather services functions from those best served by the private sector.</p> <p>It is not in the best interest of the citizens and commerce of the United States to allow private commercial interests to outweigh the need for public dissemination of weather-related information. Such information is, in fact, of strategic importance to the well-being of the national economy as well as the safety of all its participants, both collective and individual.</p> <p>The fact that information can be marketed and sold for profit must not be allowed to be the driver</p>

	<p>of public policy related to national safety and security.</p> <p>Respectfully submitted,</p> <p>Spencer R. Day Milton, MA</p>
50	<p>Very nice site!</p>
51	<p>CWSA Response to the "Proposed Clarification to NOAA's Policy on Partnerships and the Provision of Environmental Information," posted August 4, 2004.</p> <p>At the "Community Meeting on the Future of the Weather Prediction Enterprise," held July 26-28, 2005 in Boulder, Colorado General D.L. Johnson, Director of the National Weather Service, announced that NOAA would be posting for comment a proposed clarification to the existing policy as mentioned above.</p> <p>General Johnson stated that NOAA/NWS had heard the concerns expressed about competition and that NOAA/NWS had no intent to compete with America's weather industry and that they would make that clear in a clarification they planned to issue. That clarification was issued August 4, 2005 and we understand is now open for comment until November 2, 2005.</p> <p>It is noted by CWSA that this is now the third policy wording that will be in effect on this topic in less than a year's time frame. These include the 1991 Public Private Partnership Policy, which was repealed by NOAA in December of 2004, the new policy, which was implemented that month, and this new proposed revision. Such continuing changes introduce risk and volatility to America's Weather Industry and negatively affect investment.</p> <p>Other the other hand, it is appreciated that NOAA/NWS has listened to the outpouring of concern from America's Weather Industry, Congressional leaders, and others about the repeal of the old policy and the many difficulties, ambiguities, and lack of procedures in their new policy.</p> <p>It is also appreciated that NOAA mentions it "is sensitive to the concerns and prerogatives of the private sector and has no intent to displace it."</p> <p>Unfortunately the new "Proposed Clarification" does not address either of these concerns.</p> <p>In fact, if anything the new wording seems to go directly against the intent of Congress expressed in the Report from the House and Senate Conference Committee that accompanied the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 which stated:</p> <p>"The conferees urge NOAA and NWS to take maximum advantage of capabilities and services that already exist in the commercial sector to eliminate duplication and maximize the accomplishment of the core mission of the NWS."</p> <p>In the new proposed policy clarification NOAA/NWS transmuted that language to read:</p> <p>"NOAA will take advantage of existing capabilities and services of commercial and academic sectors to avoid duplication and competition in areas not related to the NOAA mission (emphasis added)."</p> <p>While Congress had stated NOAA/NWS should take maximum advantage of the capabilities and services that already exist in the commercial sector, NOAA's policy simply says NOAA "will take advantage of existing capabilities and services."</p> <p>While Congress talked about taking maximum advantage of the capabilities that already exist in the commercial sector "to eliminate duplication and maximize the accomplishment of the core mission of the NWS; NOAA talks about avoiding duplication and competition in areas not at all related to the NOAA mission.</p>

The NOAA change is especially telling in light of its self-described mission in the “Policy on Partnerships.”

The Policy’s “Introduction” refers to four mission goals, the broadest of which is “Serves society’s needs for weather and water information.”

This goal is all-inclusive as a mission. The new policy clarification talks about avoiding duplication and competition in areas not related to the NOAA mission. Accordingly, the new clarification is talking about avoiding duplication and competition in areas other than “serving society’s needs for weather and water information.”

One could ask why it would be that NOAA itself would be competing and duplicating products and services not related to their own mission to begin with, so that they will now pledge to avoid doing that. What products and services does NOAA have that do not “serve society’s needs for weather information?” What would those things be to which the new clarification would apply?

Secondly, one could ask where did a mission such as “serve society’s needs for weather information” come from since such is not defined in law anywhere that we are aware of and is all encompassing. It seems to include not only the Core Mission stated by NOAA of protecting life and property, but appears to encompass all aspects of the weather community including the current function of the academic sector, the news media, and America’s weather industry.

Congress was clear in the Conference Report in its urging that NOAA utilize the commercial sector to eliminate duplication and maximize the accomplishment of the core mission of the National Weather Service.

NOAA has done just the opposite in this new policy clarification, stating that it will utilize the commercial and academic sectors to avoid duplication and competition in areas not related to their mission at all.

This wording is bizarre at best, and confusing at least, and hardly clarifies anything.

If, as General Johnson stated in Boulder, Colorado at the AMS meeting, NOAA wants to make it clear that they do not intend to compete with America’s weather industry, why doesn’t NOAA/NWS simply say so in plain language?

This goes to the core of the entire issue as to why NOAA repealed the 1991 Public Private Partnership policy which stated: “The NWS will not compete with the private sector when the service is currently provided or can be provided by commercial enterprises unless otherwise directed by applicable law.”

That is a clear statement.

It is disappointing that NOAA has taken the language and the strong urging of the House/Senate Conferees and utilized those very words to ignore the conferees admonition and to further confuse a policy that does the opposite of that which NOAA was urged to do.

We urge the “Proposed Clarification” be withdrawn, and that a true rework of the existing “Policy on Partnerships” be undertaken to accomplish General Johnson’s statement that NOAA wants to make it clear that it has no intention to compete with America’s Weather Industry or to duplicate its products and services.

Very truly yours,

Barry Lee Myers
Chair, Legislative Committee

	<p><i>Commercial Weather Services Association</i> Executive Vice President AccuWeather, Inc. State College, PA</p> <p>Steven A. Root <i>President</i> <i>Commercial Weather Services Association</i> President & CEO WeatherBank, Inc Edmond, OK</p>
52	<p>I very much value the public dissemination of environmental information currently so prevalent from NOAA and other organizations. I feel that it would do a great disservice to all Americans for exclusive rights to the weather data generated by their tax dollars to be sold to commercial third parties, and that the revenue generated by selling such rights would never offset the public good that has been lost as a result.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
53	<p>I understand that you are considering outsourcing/privatizing some of the functions of NOAA and NWS. I have finally found a useful government run entity - and now someone wants to change it!</p> <p>You guys do a great service to our country. I'm a NWS Storm Spotter and love the input I can give and the feedback and information I can receive at several different levels and channels of communication. Please do not try to 'fix what is not broken'!!!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Kevin Foster</p>
54	<p>I would be deeply disappointed in NOAA were to give deference in dissemination of its vital information to the private sector over the public sector. With whom does your duty lie? To the people of the United States? Or to the private industry?</p> <p>I seriously hope you will reconsider this unfortunate proposed "clarification" that leaves the common folks out of the picture.</p>
55	<p>I am writing to voice my strong opposition to the proposed clarification in Section 4 of NOAA's "Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information". In particular, I object to the insertion of the phrase "NOAA will take advantage of existing capabilities and services of commercial and academic sectors to avoid duplication and competition in areas not related to the NOAA mission."</p> <p>Duplication of capabilities and services in critical systems is commonly used to protect against failure of the system. In systems engineering the term "duplication" is also known as "redundancy".</p> <p>This policy change would lead us to believe that "redundancy" is a bad thing, a waste of resources. Yet, in critical systems, "redundancy" is purposely built-in to avoid single points of failure. The internet was designed to survive a nuclear war, and this was accomplished by building in "redundancy". Large internet websites have many "redundant" servers, so that if one server fails, the site will still stay running. NASA builds in "redundancy" in its critical systems to protect the lives of astronauts. High performance computers take advantage of "redundancy" to solve problems that could not otherwise be solved. There are many examples of the advantages of using "redundancy" in large, complex, and adaptive systems.</p> <p>The dissemination of weather information is an example of a large, critical system. Lives depend on accurate and rapid dissemination of weather information. Weather information is spread in many ways, by radio and television, via the internet, through daily newspapers, in face-to-face conversation, over the telephone, by cellphone, and by other evolving wireless media technologies. As in any large critical system, which the public depends on for protection of life</p>

	and property, "duplication" is required to maximize the rapid flow of information. Avoiding "duplication" does not serve the public interest, and NOAA's mission should be solely to serve the public interest, even when the interest of the public conflicts with the profit motive of private sector entities.
56	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am a concerned citizen with a B.S. in meteorology and an appreciation of how valuable weather information is (not just "severe" weather information). With this in mind, please don't let an ignorant senator decide the fate of our valuable NWS.</p> <p>If anything, more money should be spent on the NWS, especially considering the lack of funding related to hurricanes that we've seen in the news over the past couple months. All U.S. citizens take great value in the NWS...it is one thing that I am proud to pay taxes for. Thank you!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Michael P. Timm Carol Stream, IL</p>
57	I live in Florida and need and use image information during the hurricane season (which may never end...). Absolutely NO privatization of image information! Image information and dissemination must be FREE and available for all to use.
58	I will be very upset if our politicians give in to the the private weather services and eliminate all the great info we get for free on the network of National Weather Service web sites. This is all crucial information that should remain free to the public. It would be a tragedy if people like me were forced to pay a private service like Accuweather a lot of money to get weather radar, hurricane data, NWS forecasts, etc. PLEASE do not change the organization of NOAA/NWS.
59	<p>www.wunderground.com saved our lives.</p> <p>Please do not restrict the info they are providing us, it's an excellent source of updates!</p> <p>Thank you, Liisa Pasila 55 yrs, Finland Jamie Heil, 54 yrs, Florida Leena Gomez Pasila, 18 yrs Spain</p>
60	Do not do this, please leave all information public.
61	<p>Will this improve research funding? If not, I'm opposed. Also opposed if it will limit public access in any way to government weather info, especially websites.</p> <p>Wendy Russell WA State</p>
62	I really do enjoy and support the Weather Underground. I depend on it so please let us keep it. Thank you!
63	<p>It is imperative that taxpayer funded weather information remain publicly and privately available in full.</p> <p>Private sources for information are not a sufficient substitute for NOAA services as private institutions are not accountable to the public and the public is offered no recourse. That is, my representative in California has no influence over a company in Pennsylvania.</p> <p>Private companies are welcome to augment public services and are welcome to provide sufficient added value to generate revenue, but in no way should NOAA stop providing comparable services.</p>
64	<p>Living in Florida, I rely on the nhc noaa website a lot lately. Change any wording you want - just don't change the public's ability to access the info available as it is now.</p> <p>Bill Weld Boynton Beach, FL</p>

	2004 Francis & Jeanne
65	I am not in favor of any changes of current policy. Why change what is already working well?
66	Please don't change the information the agency currently provides. I live in Tampa, FL, and constantly monitor the noaa.com site. I subscribed to accuweather.com last year for \$39.95/yr and saw little benefit. When the renewal came due, they had INCREASED the subscription to \$59.95/yr (did not renew, obviously). If NOAA were to only provide data to for-profit companies, imagine what that price would be. We can't live (literally) without access to the data and analysis you provide during hurricane season. Thanks for all you do to protect all of us on the gulf and eastern coasts.
67	NO to privatization! Once the private sector gets it's hands on NWS/NOAA, the general public will never be able to get any information, other than what what is decided we're "allowed" to have. This places us in a dangerous situation, when hazardous weather is threatening. We need to know exactly what is out there so that we can prepare ourselves and make informed decisions about our lives. Thank you.
68	My tax dollars at work. What you are really saying is I should have to pay twice for weather information. First in taxes, second to some weather paysite. That really makse so much sense for the average tax paying citizen.
69	As the resident of Miami Beach I am deeply disheartened by the commercial interests that would interfere with the dissemination of vital information to the public. After having followed the NHC so closely during the 2004/05 hurricane seasons I think it is crucial that information continues to be distributed in this manner. Obviously I am especially concerned as I live on a barrier island that is particularly vulnerable to storm surges and the like. This information affects all of us in the south east and the late summer/early fall months haven physically and economically been very trying times. I see no reason to create any further stress.
70	why cut the flow of information? knowledge of what the weather is doing is important to the common person and all of the world. Will you limit from who we can get the information? Will we have to pay out money to understand about something that will affect us .. all the time! THIS privatization of weather info - is like asking us to pay for the very air we breath in. AND pay for this we will have to do if this happens. You talk of to avoid duplication.. yet what is happening.. we have different angles of the same story. The private sector will charge for any information, the academic will have more cut backs due to hard times. YOU would leave us all in the cold! I ask for the warmth of NOAA. I would recommend that NOAA consider increasing "duplication" to better serve the public in times of great crisis.
71	The taxpayers of the United States pay for this service. To privatize it in any manner or open it up to the possibility of decreased service in a time when weather is becoming increasingly erratic and devastating is on the same level as signing potential death warrants for those who can not afford an Additional cost for the information which Our Taxes already pay for. Does NOAA wish to be responsible for not standing up to act of abuse of power? The timing of this "clarification" along with proposed bills and Sanatorium's Accuweather alliance is nothing less then shameful. Stand up for your Rights and those of the Taxpayers before it is too late! Or are Librarians the only group left with Sense and Integrity?
72	First off, as a member of the public, I feel it is a great disservice to take information gained at public (taxpayer) expense and only be able to access this information by paying for it (double taxation??). We have one of the best weather forecasting systems in the world, and to chop it up would be insane (if it aint broke, don't fix it!!). Secondly, as a amateur radio operator and member of slywarn, I feel that this would be disasterous. First of all, I volunteer my time, and my assets to help provide services to assist in severe weather situations. When I do this, I use all the tools that are at my disposal (weatherunderground, intellicast, NOAA, NHC, NSSL, etc.) all of which are FREE. I feel that these tools assist me in helping me do my job as a storm spotter to

	<p>better position myself and prepare for severe wx. It just isn't right that if this thing passes, that I should have to pay to look at the information that I use in order to help out the very same people that I am having to pay!! I hope you understand where I am coming from. I would be more than happy to discuss this with anyone interested.</p> <p>thank you for listening to my one small voice</p> <p>73's</p> <p>David L. Hensley (KC4NKY) Columbia, South Carolina</p>
73	<p>HAVING TO RELY ON THE MEDIA FOR OUR HURRICANE STORM INFO WOULD BE DEVASTATING. WE DESERVE THE RIGHT TO SEE FOR OURSELVES BY LOOKING AT MODELS AND LINKS POSTED BY OTHERS. WE ARE AMERICA RIGHT? WHAT ARE YOU PEOPLE THINKING?</p>
74	<p>The public interest would not be best served by NOAA withhold information in order to not compete with private weather products. This, in fact, would be a disaster. By releasing all available information to the public, NOAA only encourages private enterprise to provide even more accurate and valuable weather reporting. Please don't change anything.</p> <p>Andrew Lee</p>
75	<p>I do not want to receive my weather information ONLY from the commercial sector. I want the freedom to access information from organizations not for profit. I believe the services provided by NOAA should be available to anyone who wants to access it. There are many things on your site that I may not be able to find at a commercial site because they(whoever "they" may be) feel there is not enough interest to warrant providing that particular image or report etc. In this era of information accessibility, to limit access seems completely contrary to your mission. If folks do not want to take the time to read and explore your site and want someone to provide their information in canned form, they certainly have that right. But please don't limit my rights. I believe there is an ample audience for commercial delivery of weather services, and I make use of them too. However, commercial interests should not be allowed to limit my rights to information from agencies that my tax dollars help to fund.</p>
76	<p>Sirs & Madames,</p> <p>How can any information NOAA collects be determined to be "not related to the NOAA mission"? What would not be of benefit to the nation would be for NOAA to use our taxes to collect information, then give it only to selected private entities, who would then sell it back to the taxpaying public. With the proposed new wording, the policy would be contradicting itself. Be NOAA, or close the doors & give us a tax refund. Thank you for the opportunity to express an opinion in this matter.</p>
77	<p>The NOAA and companion agencies provide a needed service to our communities. Please do not limit our access to this information. We need to make choices about our lives and property and the data you provide allows informed choices. If we only have to depend on commercial weather information, we would be hampered by having our information filtered by someone else. We need to be able to access any information source we want when we want and how we want.</p>
78	<p>I am not sure what the full ramifications of this bill will be but I would certainly hope that it would never lead towards the elimination of free weather data from any government Internet site or data supplied to universities. This information is critical to saving lives and any move to eliminate it would be irresponsible to say the least.</p>
79	<p>Funding for NOAA, NWS, NHC come from people like myself – tax payers. If the Dept of Commerce or Sen. (In)Santorum give in to the corporate pressure's from interests of profit, such as Accuweather, our nation will lose the best GOVT program it ever had. As soon as the Greedy politicians get their hands on new campaign donations from for profit enterprises like Santorum's checks from Accuweather donors NOAA et al will be dead. The public will have a tougher time getting accurate weather info than today. I cannot begin to express sadness now that the privatization of NOAA under the Corporation of the United States Bush Regime is likely occurring. Do the Tax Payers of the USA really deserve to now pay twice for weather info? Pay once in taxes, pay twice to Accuweather for the most updated NOAA data? God, I sure hope someone has the power to stop this.</p>

	<p>Sincerely – NOAA.gov addict</p> <p>Brian Cashman</p>
80	<p>The privatization of any portion of NOAA's delivery of information to the public is absolutely a terribly wrong idea. The culture of private industry in the United States is dominated by the drive for profits above all else. That includea above quality, customer service and satisfaction, ethics, morality and legality whenever the law seems possible to bypass, skirt, compromise, etc. Likewise, a huge number of government officials themselves conduct their personal and public affairs in an identical fashion. So.. Please let the staff in NOAA who are likely more concerned with doing their jobs well in spite of bad management deliver the finished goods of their work to their working counterparts in the rest of U.S. society. Please tell any lousy managers in NOAA and private industry looking to gut and scavenge NOAA's role in the weather field for their own personal gain to go and try to find some honest effort to contribute to society for a change.</p>
81	<p>I am an immigrant to the US. One of the aspects of life here that I have truly appreciated is the availability of information to the general public. This allows them to become more fully informed and aware in many areas, not the least of which is the weather.</p> <p>Being a Florida resident, consultation both directly with your information sources and with others opinions has greatly supplemented the official NHC data in a way that TV reporting does not.</p> <p>Any restriction of this information would be both personally very disappointing and contrary to the American ideals.</p>
82	<p>I am completely opposed to the change of Section 4 "recognizing" partnerships the private sector. You, the NOAA, are chartered to forecast the weather for the protection of everyone in the country. A side effect of that is the production of highly accurate forecasts, even in times of non-critical weather. As a citizen who already pays for every byte of the research performed by the NOAA and the NWS, and the computers upon which this research is performed, I fully expect that all of this data will continue to be made available to me, in a real time and no-extra-cost fashion.</p> <p>I want to be clear: I am not opposed to allowing the commercial weather services to use data collected and processed by the NOAA. If television and radio stations or other private entities wish to do business with commercial weather services, they are obviously free to do so, and I have no problem with that. And I have no problem if the commercial weather services wish to use your product, enhance it, and make their new enhanced product available. This is not about restricting their trade in any way.</p> <p>It is, however, about allowing the citizens of this country access to data and research we've already paid for through our tax dollars. If the commercial weather services find it difficult to compete in this environment, like everyone else in the technology industry they will have to find new business models and new revenue streams on their own (which they seem to be doing already.) This foul attempt to abrogate our rights to our data reeks of the worst of politics for the worst of reasons -- greed. Please rise above the current seventh circle of lobbyists and do the right thing: make no alterations to your current policy.</p> <p>Sincerely, John Deters</p>
83	<p>I strongly oppose adoption of the proposed "clarification" of section 4. One of the greatest benefits of public access to the internet has been the wide and timely availability of NOAA weather, climate, and other environmental information to the citizens who live in the covered areas and pay the taxes which support the data acquisition and analysis. The proposed change to section 4 changes this by directing NOAA to "take advantage" of "existing capabilities" of non-federal entities in a manner "to avoid duplication and competition." While appearing to be a sensible policy approach, this is incorrect for three reasons: (1) The source data and primary analysis are done by NOAA and cooperating federal agencies -- non-federal (especially commercial) parties with the "capability" to disseminate and/or repackage this information have said capabilities solely because NOAA makes the information and analysis available to them -- effectively, restricting direct, free, public access to NOAA information is creating an entitlement to</p>

	<p>selected commercial entities, with the certain side effect of reducing public availability, and probable side effect of increasing public cost for access to this information. (2) NOAA (especially NHC) has created a superb set of internet-based facilities to provide rapid, free, public access to information. While this has led to complaints of "competition" from non-federal parties that previously had a market in providing such access in pre-internet days, the fact is that the change is NOT due to a change in NOAA's information access policies but rather due to a change in the communication medium. If the non-federal parties have nothing but added-cost distribution mechanisms to offer, their service is neither duplicative nor competitive with what NOAA offers, and had the internet existed before the NHC such parties would not exist. The proposed change appears to be an attempt to protect interests vested in prior technologies, which (as a past user of such services) did not provide as timely nor as useful information as is now available directly from NOAA to the citizens needing the information. If the non-federal parties do have differentiated services to offer (as many do), there is no problem of duplication nor of competition with those offered directly by NOAA. (3) NOAA has maintained, and in many cases improved, the quality of its information over time. There is nothing in the proposed change to section 4 that requires the non-federal parties whose "capabilities" are to be non-duplicated or non-competed-with to MAINTAIN the quality, availability, nor accessibility of those "capabilities." Based on past experience I have far greater trust in NOAA to maintain such capabilities than in commercial parties, which have frequently downgraded services that I found valuable and was willing to pay for. If a policy is adopted that attempts to avoid duplication and competition, there must be a defined review period to reevaluate such items to ensure that the otherwise-duplicate capability remains publically available and up to sufficient quality standards -- which is better done by having NOAA make the information available to the public in the first place. After all, we are already paying for the acquisition and analysis of this information through our federal taxes.</p>
84	<p>With all the problems our government is facing in other areas (FBI, CIA, FEMA, etc.), why do we need to change something (NOAA) that is working relatively well? Privatising in general for areas affecting our national security/interest that should be the responsibility of our federal government is a bad idea - it is only creating more special interests and opportunities for graft/corruption. Aren't we already seeing the bad effects of mixing government and corporate interests? Have the sponsors of this bill considered potential national security problems spreading around advanced technologies and other classified information undoubtedly possessed by NOAA? Privatisation will do absolutely nothing for the welfare or security of the clients of NOAA - that is, the citizens of the United States. We need to wake up on this and House bill S 786 IS1S should be withdrawn/defeated.</p>
85	<p>NOAA, I am completely opposed to Santorum's bill and any other hidden amendments cloaked in misleading "legaleez" that takes forecasting out of the jurisdiction of NOAA, NWS, NHC, or HPC and hands it over to private corporations.</p> <p>When we are given forecasts by NOAA, NWS, NHC, HPC, we are hearing a unified voice, unadulterated interpretation of data with a standard that has been for years, consistent day after day. I have serious doubts that the private sector, in competition with one another "to be you're most accurate meteorologist" can provide that standard. I could visualize scenarios of conflicting information leading to chaos.</p> <p>This is a ridiculous proposal under the guise of cutting back govt. spending. And I don't understand the point if our governmental agencies will still be doing all the hard work involved in collecting and disseminating the data, HOW MUCH WILL WE SAVE if we cut out their forecasts?</p> <p>I can think of a helluva lot of other ways of reducing wasteful spending. It kind of reminds me of earlier suggestions such as eliminating aircraft reconnaissance flights into hurricanes since we now have satellites. Or the brilliant idea that some politicians had a few years of eliminating the USGS because it had outlived its usefulness, and besides private geologists could provide all the needed information. Totally ridiculous.</p> <p>This is only being proposed as a benefit for the private forecasting firms, and is a supreme</p>

	<p>example of politicians failing to represent the best interest (and safety) of their constituents.</p> <p>I say NO!!! And on that note...if anything should be clear to all of us, NOAA, NWS and NHC have been subject to woefully inadequate funding...This is as disgraceful as our lack of maintenance of infrastructure in this country. We in Louisiana have pleaded this issue to the deaf ears in Congress for years...</p> <p>Thank You for your time and efforts, "DocNDswamp" on WUBA C. Randy Lewis Houma, LA</p>
86	<p>No,the public should have the right to have all info on all weather situations at any time and unrevised in real time so they can make critical decisions as to what they need to prepare for.</p> <p>Please do not privatize!!</p>
87	<p>Please do not take away my free weather.gov forecasts. Actually I guess my tax dollars buy the forecast - anyway, please don't take them away! I can't afford accuweather and besides they are not as good!</p>
88	<p>I am vehemently against any privatization of NOAA functions. Duplication of function is not redundant when NOAA provides free access to information of great value to the overall public. In fact the interaction of NOAA findings and private findings is one form of scientific validation.</p> <p>Private, even boutique, weather services provide much needed specific information to paying customers, but this cannot replace the value of the products that NOAA offers the general user for the cost from the taxpayer's budget.</p> <p>Free for public use weather information is largely free of the possibility of commercial biases. It offers a level of authority and legitimacy that is not to be matched by for profit providers.</p> <p>Amatuer, student, farm and small business users can have or learn what ever level of knowledge they need to use the weather information and are an important audience, but as a market they would likely be priced out by competitive private agencies.</p> <p>There certainly is a place for private weather services, these can meet specific demands that go beyond what it might be reasonable for the taxpayer to provide. But there is no way the private sector can fully replace the public sector information about weather; coordination of grants, findings, research, satellite information and other sources is a proper function of government. The cost is miniscule when compared to the value of the service to all Americans. NoAA fills one of many services a good government needs to provide to its citizens.</p> <p>With few exceptions the products that NOAA now produces are meaningful to weather users. Free and open access to this information is an essential component of the service. Don't partner, don't reduce and don't eliminate open access to NOAA services.</p>
89	<p>Given that:</p> <p>A. most of the commercial providers get their data from NOAA in the first place</p> <p>B. We, the the public, are already paying for this information via our tax dollars</p> <p>C. We are experiencing one of the most horrific hurricane seasons on record</p> <p>I can't think of a more foolhardy or irresponsible thing than to turn off public access to NOAA information.</p>
90	<p>Hello. I pay taxes to support the National Weather Service's life saving ability to put information out for free to the general public. Under no circumstances should a government, tax payer funded agency be restricting rights of the tax payers to view information which they are paying for.</p>

91 NCIM Response to "Proposed Clarification to NOAA's "Policy on Partnerships and the Provision of Environmental Information" (Aug 4, 2005)

The National Council of Industrial Meteorologists (NCIM) is pleased to submit the following comments on the "Proposed Clarification to NOAA's Policy on Partnerships and the Provision of Environmental Information" posted by NOAA on August 4, 2005. NCIM applauds NOAA's willingness to address concerns related to its original Policy issued in December 2004, and its interest in soliciting additional comments and engaging in discussions with the private sector on a range of partnership issues. However, we remain concerned that NOAA's most recent policy clarification missed an opportunity to address a few key issues NCIM first raised in May 2005, perhaps most important of which was a clarification as to how NOAA would fairly and forcefully reduce competition with private sector meteorological consultants and commercial weather information and services providers.

By way of review, in May 2005, NCIM issued a position paper in response to NOAA's original policy in December 2004, noting several areas of concern to the private sector. The position paper called upon NOAA to undertake the following steps:

1. Develop and participate in internal and external forums through which NOAA personnel interact with private meteorological entities to understand what private services are already available or being developed
2. Implement procedures to spread the knowledge of private meteorological services, especially through those sectors of NOAA, such as the National Weather Service, that frequently receive external requests for specialized information and services that are currently available from private sector meteorologists
3. Provide adequate resources and mechanisms within NOAA to assess the impact of new product and service initiatives on private meteorological entities already providing or developing similar products and services
4. Develop and implement internal procedures to ascertain whether NOAA's regional headquarters and field offices are adhering to policies regarding cooperation and competition with private sector meteorology
5. Provide a formal and responsive mechanism through which private sector meteorologists can request and receive a review of any new NOAA products and services that infringe on existing private sector services

Following publication of the NCIM position paper, NOAA began meeting with its private sector partners, to address ongoing concerns they held regarding the December 2004 Partnership Policy. In June 2005, NOAA Deputy Under-Secretary, Brig. General (U.S. Air Force, Ret.) Jack Kelly, Jr. participated in an open and frank discussion on the policy at NCIM's annual meeting in Cocoa Beach, Florida. Subsequent to that meeting, in early August 2005, a small group of NCIM members met informally with Brig. General (U.S. Air Force, Ret.) David L Johnson (NWS Director) and Ed Johnson (NWS Director of Strategic Planning and Policy) in Washington D.C. to further the discussions that had commenced two months earlier. We note that the proposed NOAA policy clarification was issued for comment shortly after the Washington meeting, clearly reflecting NOAA's willingness to listen and respond to its partner constituency.

However additional modification of the policy is necessary. NCIM feels that the proposed policy clarification must include a rational and workable means for independent review of specific instances where NOAA is alleged to be duplicating services and products developed and marketed by private sector meteorological consultants and commercial weather firms.

In the interest of addressing the concerns of competition, oversight and dialog between NOAA and the private sector meteorological community, NCIM has drafted the following alternative language to Policy Section 4:

	<p>4. The nation benefits from government information disseminated both by federal agencies and by diverse nonfederal parties, including commercial and not-for-profit entities. NOAA recognizes that among these non-federal entities, private sector meteorologists are NOAA's primary and most visible stakeholders and partners in providing weather and climate services to the nation. Indeed, the private sector meteorological community constitutes the group that arguably most benefits from and is most negatively impacted by changes in NOAA policies, products and services. Therefore, it will be NOAA's expressed intention to identify and make every reasonable effort to take advantage of existing capabilities and services found within the commercial sector. Moreover, NOAA will aggressively encourage and participate in interaction and collaboration with its private sector meteorology partners through a variety of means and venues, the purpose of which would be to leverage limited federal and private resources in order to provide the nation with the best possible weather and climate information products and services. In cases where specific conflicts are alleged, NOAA and the aggrieved party or parties will agree to explore the appropriateness of binding, independent third-party dispute resolution. These actions will ensure that NOAA's federal resources are devoted to maintaining and improving core functions in accordance with NOAA's responsibilities as an agency of the U.S. government, to serve the public interest and advance the nation's environmental information enterprise as a whole.</p> <p>Again, the steps initiated by NOAA to address private sector concerns regarding its recent Policy on Partnerships and the Provision of Environmental Information are to be commended. However this is an ongoing endeavor, which will require a sustained dialog between the federal and private constituents of our weather and climate enterprise. NCIM strongly urges NOAA to pursue those opportunities that would result in broader recognition of and increased cooperation with private sector meteorology — NOAA's key stakeholder and partner in the provision of this nation's weather and climate information and services.</p> <p>Respectfully submitted,</p> <p>Christopher D. Bedford, President National Council of Industrial Meteorologists</p> <p>October 27, 2005</p>
92	<p>I live in Hurricane Alley and in the past NOAA has been my No1 information Weather Center.I look at other Weather Centers but put my faith in NOAA.I think if other Weather Stations don't like you giving information free on the Internet they should pay for your equipment,aircraft and personal.I know nothing is perfect but NOAA has done a excellent job of warning people about the danger and the need for evacuation in plenty of time in the past.I like your down to earth, straight forward reports and tracking system.In the past in all the Hurricanes I have been in NOAA,my gen set and Internet(Not TV)has kept me informed. Keep UP The Good Work. Pat Flanagan</p>
93	<p>Please do not privatize this crucial information! It was looking at the official National Hurricane Center's charts at 11:45 at night which prompted me to evacuate my home in the suburbs of New Orleans, LA for Katrina.</p> <p>Too often the local news sensationalizes every little bit of information. Or pushes their own computer model over the gov'ts. Why should I trust some local stations computer model (which incidently had Katrina going into Mobile AL) when the gov't has highly complex models which run on multi processor machines for smaller ocean grids?</p> <p>Or even worse "find out at 10" ratings boost. With access to information funded by TAX dollars I can discover what is occuring without 'waiting' or listening to commercials.</p> <p>For Katrina, I was out at a company function and would NOT have found out until Saturday morning whenever I woke up, about the storm. With NOAA I was able to know Friday at 11:45 that I would need to board up my house and pack.</p>

	<p>It wasn't just me this helped, it was due to this, that I knew to call a friend on vacation to run down, pick up her animals and leave!</p> <p>Do NOT leave LIFE SAVING information up to CORPORATIONS to disseminate. They will only care about ratings, not about getting the information out in a timely and effective manner. One of the many things I have learned being in this disaster zone is that corporations do not have people's best interests at heart. They may get their pr puff, but when the actually call is made, they could care less.</p> <p>PLEASE keep this available to the public!</p>
94	<p>Please do whatever you have to do to keep all the information you have regarding the weather freely accessible to the general public. Many, many of us rely on getting the information directly from it's source, usually via the internet, rather than through a weatherman's or meteorologist's interpretation. Thankyou.</p>
95	<p>"To avoid duplication and competition.." I find the policy vague. I do however want to make it clear that I believe NOAA should focus on its mission and not let private enterprise limit 1.)NOAA's responsibility to improve monitoring equipment and 2) NOAA"S responsibility to provide the public with weather information.</p> <p>1.) I myself am a member of CWOP and provide my weather data every 5 minutes. I do so with my own funds. Being involved in CWOP, I understand the benefit of having multiple sources of the same type of data. NOAA should actually be better funded to invest more into its own new and improved monitoring systems even if it is a duplication of that in the private sector.</p> <p>2.) The public has a right to the data collected by NOAA especially weather data. Private enterprise should not be considered when NOAA is involved in disemminating weather data and forecasts.</p> <p>Thank you!</p>
96	<p>Per NOAA's solicitation, my comments regarding a revision to the partnership policy is stated below:</p> <p>4. The nation benefits from government information disseminated both by Federal agencies and by diverse nonfederal parties, including commercial and not-for-profit entities. NOAA recognizes unequivocally that private sector meteorologists are NOAA's primary stakeholders and partners in providing weather and climate services to the nation and constitute the group that is most affected (positively or negatively) when changes are made in NOAA policies, products and services. Therefore, NOAA will uniformly prohibit the development and dissemination of products and services that unfairly compete with the products and services of private sector meteorology, and will allow private sector meteorologists to develop and provide products and services to their clients and the nation without fear of government competition. NOAA will positively encourage interaction and collaboration with private sector meteorology through a variety of means and venues to leverage limited federal and private resources, in order that the best possible services will be made available to their mutual stakeholders, namely, public and private end-users of weather and climate information. In cases where conflicts occur, NOAA will seek independent third-party resolutions of conflicts to this partnership. These actions will ensure that NOAA's federal resources are devoted to maintaining and improving core functions in accordance with NOAA's responsibilities as an agency of the U.S. Government, to serve the public interest and advance the nation's environmental information enterprise as a whole.</p> <p>These comments are mine and mine alone and do not necessarily reflect the viewpoint or opinion of my employer or the US Department of Energy.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Matt Parker</p> <p>Matthew J. Parker, CCM Principal Meteorologist</p>

	<p>Atmospheric Technologies Group Savannah River National Laboratory Westinghouse Savannah River Company Aiken, SC</p>
97	<p>I urge NOAA not to limit itself in any way regarding the information that it provides to taxpaying citizens, regardless of any weather-forecasting capability (or lack thereof) possessed by any private corporation.</p> <p>If this clarification can in any way eventually limit the information NOAA provides to taxpaying U. S. citizens, then I urge you not to modify your policy.</p> <p>NOAA's ability to provide taxpayers with the weather forecasts they need to remain prepared and safe in the face of potential weather-related disasters like hurricanes must remain unimpeded by any political interference from the misguided Republican right wing.</p>
98	<p>The changes proposed to Section 4 of the Proposed Clarification document are completely unreasonable and will endanger public safety. By limiting access to timely and accurate weather information for the benefit of private industry the change will significantly effect the ability of hikers, skiers, mountain climbers and others to have access to critical weather information. Exceptions for emergency and severe weather alerts are not nearly enough to provide the information required to safely conduct outdoor activities of these types. Please do not risk my life and the lives of others for the very clear and direct benefit only to private companies (regardless of whether they are generous donors to certain Pennsylvania senator's campaigns). My life depends on your action here - please do the right thing.</p>
99	<p>I suppose I should not be amazed that finer tentacles of the Bush Administration have reached down to to latch on to NOAA's future. Along with the Santorum bill that will hopefully die a quiet death, it appears that this long-range plan to privatize every aspect of the federal government is fully in swing. I wholeheartedly object to the "Proposed Clarification to NOAA's Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information" in that it is just another step to allow the private sector to control what should be public information. At this rate, it won't be long before Accuweather, et al, come as close to controlling the weather as mankind has ever come.</p> <p>I'm afraid George Orwell is alive and well and living in Washington D.C.</p> <p>Ken Niles</p>
100	<p>Do not privatize weather information. Allow the gov't weather services to continue so that corporate big-wigs won't take control of price and quality. The price would go up, the quality down, and eventually the poor (who still pay taxes) won't get the info they paid for. Stop this at once!</p>
101	<p>The Environmental Information collected by NOAA should be available in full to the general public. It is the general public that pays for NOAA and to restrict the free access to any of that data is wrong.</p>
102	<p>My responsibilities include Emergency Management for an Alabama coast gated community. As such I rely upon your products and GLOGS to prepare for the all too often hurricanes. Without the NOAA and NWS inputs to you I believe we would not be as well advised and certainly not be able to call voluntary evacuations at the desired 72 hours before landfall. The products today are great and give us a head start, much needed with the limited evacuation infrastructure.</p> <p>Please keep the information flowing at the current rate. Lives depend on it!</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Richard Carson / Emergency Management Operations in Alabama</p>
103	<p>All I have to say is if I have to now pay for the information that I get from the NWS right now than I will be pissed... Taxpayers like me are the ones who fund this info and I will not pay additional money for the info that I use to predict the weather for my family and friends...some of which could be deemed life threatening...</p>

	<p>I understand that private enterprises might make money off of noaa info because they repackage the info but this is just a value added service and should remain that way...to take a value added service and make it a mandatory service that would force people into purchase would be ludicrous and unfair...you would basically be subsidizing a private enterprise...</p>
104	<p>Please do not privatize the weather info...many, many of us use it for our work to make decisions. I check it many times daily, and consider it a good use of my taxes. Thank you. Jeff Minnich Jeff Minnich Garden Design, Inc. Arlington, VA</p>
105	<p>Please let us keep the information from the NWS and NOAA on the web for free. I utilize it often in my work in landscaping, and would hate to have to subscribe to a web site to get information my tax dollars help pay for.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Susan Kappel Richmond, VA</p>
106	<p>I hope these changes are not made, because I do not want to rely on the private sector or a partnership for hurricane information. Please forward and use for your cause. Caren Berry Tampa, FL</p>
107	<p>Please privatize the NWS. Support Bill S. 786. Thank you.</p>
108	<p>The proposed changes would appear to herald the replacement of NOAA function (and, to an unspecified degree, its historical mission) with the efforts of others in "the private sector" and "the commercial sector." I would suspect that these latter two groups, which may overlap to some degree, probably do not serve the national interest to the degree that the NOAA does (particularly to the extent that these sectors comprise extranational agencies). I therefore view these changes as likely to do harm to the national interest.</p> <p>I suspect that the forces driving the proposed changes subscribe to the philosophy that "the business of America is business." (In which case: would that it were so.) I further suspect that the proposed changes are intended to bring the NOAA's stated mandate into line with the direction in which NOAA is already being pressured to evolve, by business and pro-business interests. In which case, the changing of the mandate could be seen as something of a whitewash of these pressures, and not of something real and significant in and of itself.</p> <p>The autonomy of the NOAA will be compromised by the language of the proposed changes. This cannot help but harm the national interest, and so the nation.</p> <p>(Disclaimer: neither I nor anyone of my acquaintance is affiliated with the NOAA or related concerns or industries. I speak merely as a American citizen concerned about the likely effects of the policy change I have just now become aware of.)</p>
109	<p>We have a national budget which pays through our taxes for a gov't agency to study, research and report on our nations and worlds weather and yet its dissemination of such information is going to be restricted? It begs the question....WHY? Under no circumstances should NOAA and our universities who study climactic conditions NOT be allowed to report on their findings. They should not be hindered and hushed! WE THE PUBLIC want to know and have the right to be kept informed.</p>
110	<p>I believe that no changes should be made to our current weather reporting system. Living in Florida as I do, I feel more comfortable viewing many sources of online weather reports especially during hurricane season. No, I don't ignore my locate TV weather, but I do like as much info as possible concerning storms . Privatizing weather information sources would restrict the flow of timely weather assessments. I don't believe privatization is in the best interest of the masses. It</p>

	appears to serve only business interests. If tax dollars pay for it, allow all taxpayers to view it for free. Don't make us pay for it twice.
111	This is not a clarification, but a change. NOAA's mission should be to serve the taxpayers and citizens of this country and not those of influence. When this has happened before LESS information is available to those who pay for it, not more.
112	I think that the existing standards are best for this country. NOAA weather bulletins, alerts, and forecasts are extremely valuable to this country as they now stand and they should not be restricted in order to "reduce competition" with private companies.
113	I would like to comment that it is a shame you are considering privatizing NOAA/NWS. I feel the information you have provided in the past should continue to be available to the public. I respectfully request you rethink this issue.
114	We use the current NOAA site every day in planning for our landscape crews. It is ridiculous to think that this service should be privatized when it has already been paid with tax dollars. If you have two people doing the same job one of them is unnecessary. Who will lose their job?
115	I am just going to say. If NOAA through This policy or any other policy removes their weather info from the internet or charges for their info. in any way be it through the private sector or any other means. This will only show that corruption is setting in there at NOAA. I look at your Sat loops and weather Info. everyday. You are funded by my tax dollars. You work for us Tax payers. I am no attorney but I have sent all of this Info. to my attorney so I can get a legal opinion on what I am reading. So far what I have been informed from my attorney is this new policy is very bad for the Tax payer. You want me to fund NOAA so a private company can charge me for the Info. If this policy stands and this happens. There should be an inquiry as to how this all came about. Who with the government is getting kick backs for this. Just a note I live in Florida. Where we have been privatizing the prison system. This is being stopped and all prisons will revert back to the way it should be. It has proven to be a disaster. Private companies are about making money and don't give a damn about public safety. We are supposed to learn from mistakes. It is clear that whoever is involved with this policy change has fallen into the corruption pit. As a tax payer as a citizen as one of the people that you work for be warned. If you remove the information from the internet that I pay for now and make me pay for it again from a private company. I along with several others I am bringing together will take legal action. You are funded and work for the people not private companies. NOAA has no reason or right to get into bed with the private sector. As a voter, taxpayer, and citizen I say do not do this and everyone I talk to says don't do this. All the weather blogs I am a member of say don't do this. So if the people you work for are saying don't do this. The only reason for you to do it would be someone at NOAA is going to profit from this. So if you do this someone needs to be ready to answer for it and I promise my group will get to the bottom of who is getting the kickback for this and when we find out who it is, they better run to their attorney.
116	Greetings, Please do NOT move any responsibility for the public's safety to the private sector. The goals of the private sector are admirable (profits) but they are not congruent with the public interest during a disaster or prior to disaster. Clearly they can be public-private partnerships to deliver the information to citizens, but the public sector is the implementor or the social contract between government and citizens. Abdicating that responsibility IN ANY WAY, would be an extremely bad idea. The private sector simply cannot provide for the common good. We have seen these same tensions occur when private sector concerns clash with environmental concerns, and in that case, it is we the people who have lost. Don't let this happen with public safety. Regards, Mike Fenton
117	Do not restrict the NWS from providing important weather information so that fee for services providers can make more profit out of work done by the NWS. The NWS is the main resource for

	<p>the public in getting good reliable weather information that can impact the public's safety. It would be a disaster if society was forced to pay for something their tax dollars created.</p>
118	<p>I am deeply troubled by the proposed changes in policy on public dissemination of weather information. The recent devastating hurricanes along the Gulf Coast are dramatic examples of the importance of continued public access to weather information. I have several family members that live on the Gulf Coast of Florida, including a sister that lives aboard a sailboat. Access to online data from the NOAA, NWS, Navy and NHC sites and was instrumental in acquiring information to ensure their safety. As Katrina unfolded, I watched in horror at the lack of timely, accurate information being provided through the network news. Countless people accessed the Weatherunderground tropical weather blog looking for unfiltered information and advice that helped them protect their families and belongings.</p> <p>I have no problems with the private sector making their own interpretations of the data provided by these government agencies or choosing to gather their own data. However limiting public access to that same data that has been funded by tax dollars is unacceptable. Public safety is too critical to be farmed out to the private sector. Indeed, rather than limiting duplication of information, we should be encouraging an increase in the amount and variety of data gathering and distribution. When you are talking about critical systems like weather forecasting and the potential for devastating human and economic loss, our goal should be to have redundancy of systems to ensure that we have adequate and timely information.</p>
119	<p>I think privatization of the NOAA services is wrong. The information provided to us taxpayers by the NOAA is a service that never should be privatized. It is for we the people and should not be made into a mechanism for private profit. Simply, that would be wrong--denying a basic service to taxpayers who would be denied benefits for a service that we value.</p>
120	<p>The weather affects us all and we should all have access to the complete information from NOAA. I oppose giving the advantage to private entities for such a basic right as weather information.</p>
121	<p>I do not agree with the proposed changes. NOAA reports should be available to all citizens and not subject to corporate interests. Just because some wealthy businessperson wants to make more money off the backs of working Americans, doesn't mean we should lose free weather reports.</p>
122	<p>I think privatizing the government gathered weather data so it is not accessible by the general public (taxpayers) who paid for the infrastructure, gathering and access would be a crime. There are some people who have intelligence and can make an informed decision by looking at the data. To make them pay twice to obtain the same information is ludicrous; but we are speaking about something the government has control of, so I guess I shouldn't be surprised...</p>
123	<p>As a citizen I pay taxes to fund NOAA. NOAA should not rely on the private sector to disseminate information that is of benefit to the public. Nor should the public be expected to pay a private sector entity to gain access to that information.</p> <p>Whether existing or new, I should have the same access granted to others (business) without a fee. If the private sector can make the information more palatable to me and charge me for that, it is my option to pay for that service.</p>
124	<p>I am strongly opposed to the changes to section 4 of the Proposed Clarification to NOAA's "Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information." Forcing citizens to pay to see the results produced by an agency funded by their own tax dollars is ridiculous, if not unconstitutional. Also, the NWS forecasts are invaluable to outdoorsmen (& women). By the time Severe Weather Alerts are announced, it may well be too late for someone in the mountains or other backcountry areas. Lives could be lost due to a lack of access in a timely manner to this information. Please don't let this happen.</p>
125	<p>I am particularly troubled by the proposed changes that would restrict access to weather information gathered by NOAA to the general public. As our tax money is paying for this information we should not have to buy it again from a private weather service. If this provides too much competition to commercial services, they should find alternative lines of business.</p> <p>The section on prohibiting of certain disclosure is completely backward. NOAA should be disseminating 'any weather data, information, guidance, forecast, or warning that might influence or affect the market value of any product, service, commodity, tradable, or business' as fast as</p>

	possible and any penalties should be reserved for delaying or withholding this information from the general public.
126	<p>Hi,</p> <p>If I can only "vote" for or against the proposed clarification, than I would VOTE AGAINST the proposed changes.</p> <p>HOWEVER, if given a choice, I would prefer to accept the clarification with A CHANGE OF WORDING. While I FULLY agree with the reason for the change: "The proposed clarification is intended to emphasize the statement in the present policy that NOAA will not haphazardly institute significant changes in existing information dissemination activities without first carefully considering the views and capabilities of the private sector."</p> <p>I AM WORRIED that the proposed clarification's wording is BROADER and NOT specific enough when compared with what was said above, since the current proposal says NOTHING about "will not haphazardly institute significant changes in existing information dissemination activities without carefull review".</p> <p>If the current proposal is implemented as is, it could very well lead to unforeseen and unwanted changes because the scope of the change was not limited enough.</p> <p>As a result, I suggest the following:</p> <p>#1. Remove the following sentence: "NOAA will take advantage of existing capabilities and services of commercial and academic sectors to avoid duplication and competition in areas not related to the NOAA mission."</p> <p>AND REPLACE IT WITH THIS:</p> <p>"NOAA will not haphazardly institute significant changes in existing information dissemination activities without first carefully considering the impact it would have on the private sector."</p> <p>Without this change I vote AGAINST the proposed clarification because the current clarification is TOO BROAD in scope. Thanks for your time, KR</p>
127	I would like to encourage NOAA to KEEP the EXISTING language of your "Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information"
128	I am not in favor of the proposed changes regulating our access to weather information from NOAA. We already, through our taxes pay for this information and should not be required to pay again to support business. It is unethical but the seeming trend of government at this time.
129	<p>As a resident of St. Pete, Fl, living within 1 mile of the Gulf, I am deeply reliant on NOAA data and websites during hurricane season, typically 4 to 8 times per day, waking up at 5am at times for the updates if we are at risk. I accesss drop sonde data, look at the charts, and actively follow the developments and the warnings, especialy the models and discussions.</p> <p>I do not want to have to rely on news related sites to access similar but a lesser quality informaiton, dealing with ads, photos, and other junk.</p> <p>Please ensure that NOAA retains its public website and informmation, AND the payroll needed to support it</p> <p>Thank you</p>
130	I am writing to express my ardent opposition to the proposed clarification to Section 4 of NOAA's "Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information. The existing easily accessible weather infomation available on NOAA's websites has saved my life on a number of occasions. As a mountaineer I can't wait for a severe weather alert. I need to know how the

	<p>weather is developing before it becomes severe or I may die in a remote location in the mountains. Restricting access to this kind of information to only those who pay a private weather company betrays the public trust and compromises public safety. Furthermore my families business depends on delivery drivers knowing what type of conditions to expect. Moving weather information from the public sector into the private sector puts an undue hardship on a very large number of small businesses for the benefit of a few large weather information companies. Please, leave this change out of the "Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information."</p> <p>Sincerely, Christopher Meloche Ph.D. Leland, Mississippi</p>
131	<p>National interests and public safety shouldn't be trumped by for profit enterprises. The citizens own this research and data, and shouldn't have to pay to have it repackaged.</p>
132	<p>I'm not quite sure what all of the changes in section 4 mean. It looks like it means that the budget for NOAA is going to be cut but our taxes will not. It looks like our taxes will just be redirected to something else and we will probably end up paying to access our weather reports, with or without advertising. If that is so, then NOAA is just another in a series of government agencies finding a way to cut costs by accessing pre-existing technology in a way that is going to end up costing tax payers more money.</p> <p>If this is the case, I say NO to the Proposed Clarification to NOAA's "Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information."</p>
133	<p>Now that we are into the 21st century and begining to see dividends - i.e. the internet, etc. from the candescent acceleration in advancements in technology, innovation, research and distribution of data; The challenge through the widest possible enfranchisement information and services to stakeholders, citizens and policy makers has overtaken the current doctrine, approaches and policies.</p> <p>There are a few key challenges in looking at the issues/considerations that need to be mindful to balance the prudence of commercial financial gain, vice public good and access to public services.</p> <p>NOAA has and continues to provide a critical public service - that literally saves lives; more lives saved vice hazards of nature than lost in war/conflict. As such, to the maximum extent possible, the ability for NOAA to continue to effectively and efficiently communicate in a time-value and economically efficient way must be preserved. Should private industry help to augment the mission - not at the expense of the public good, the policies should be shaped and formulated in such a way to accrete a best-of-both worlds - allowing econmic value to be derived, and added as well as advancing the public good.</p> <p>Free webservices such as the underground weather website, news outlets (online and via other media methodologies - TV, radio, etc.) must continue to be able to leverage this service/model.</p> <p>Further, research and academic access to information - which increasingly may find public-private-centers of learning partnerships, will all need to look toward developing and enhancing stratgies for sharing of results, work product and dialogue - as we continue to advance our understanding of nature (of which we still know so very little).</p> <p>A position that the Dept of Commerce/NOAA may want to consider is to develop a set of guiding principles from which both policy and legislation could be derived.</p> <p>Overall the mission and benefit NOAA has given to the US and the world is measured not only in economics, but in quality of life, and in many cases, life itself.</p> <p>Thank you for the opportunity to offer comment to this important and timely issue.</p> <p>Henry N. Dreifus</p>

134	<p>I am completely confused thanks to the government jragon as to what is intended. Boiled down, it would appear that we are going to be charged for the dissemination of information, which we have already paid for with tax dollars. Information collected that has not been scrutinized carefully enough as it is by the NHC due to insufficient funding as per the Miami Herald already!</p> <p>Keep our tax dollar collected information freely available to the public. And release more monies so that we can better use information already collected, collect MORE accurate hurricane info and NOT relive 2004 and 2005 miseries quite so desperately.</p> <p>Kathleen Terry Coral Gables, FL</p>
135	<p>While I am not clear on the implications of the wording change, I wish to state that my tax dollars pay for government forecast data, and I do not wish for that data to become unavailable to the public. I would be extremely upset not to have access to all the existing data from NOAA, NHC, NRL websites, as well as real-time Hurricane Hunter data.</p>
136	<p>In response to your clarification proposal, i am commenting on the statement "take advantage of existing capabilities and services of commercial and academic sectors to avoid duplication and competition in areas not related to the NOAA mission." ----- relating this to private companies and their attempt to privatize the information that is now available to the public ----- i do not believe that the information supplied by NOAA is in duplication to that existing in private enterprise.</p> <p>private enterprise issues information in order to benefit financially, thus the information put forth is subjected to limitations due to time and space allowed to advertising.</p> <p>the information put forth by noaa, therefore, comes to the public as more complete and with no charges attached.</p> <p>The availability of NOAA information, as it is, is the way it should remain.</p> <p>i do not think taxpayers should fund the gathering of information and then have that information given to limited private companies so they can sell it back to the people who paid for it in the first place. that is ridiculous.</p> <p>thank you dawn starke</p>
137	<p>If our taxes are paying for the gathering of this environmental information, why shouldn't we be entitled to see it without having to pay again?</p>
138	<p>I would like as much weather information to be made free -- and freely available -- to the public as possible.</p> <p>Anything that would cut the public flow of information would be dangerous and wrong.</p> <p>In fact, I would be happy if the federal government used more of my tax dollars to increase the amount of free weather information available in all media and formats.</p> <p>I am not hostile to the interests of private weather companies. However, I believe the public's interests have been paramount in the past, and they should remain the #1 concern. The private weather forecasting companies should fill in the gaps as they find them.</p>
139	<p>See attached letter from The Weather Coalition</p>



**THE WEATHER
COALITION**

September 20, 2005

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ray Ban, co-chair
Executive Vice President
The Weather Channel

John Snow, co-chair
Director
Oklahoma Weather Center

Richard Anthes
President
University Corporation for
Atmospheric Research

Phillip Ardanuy
*Director, Remote Sensing
Applications*
Raytheon Company

Edward Bensman
Program Manager
Raytheon Company

Carl Bjerkaas
*Vice President for Operations,
Weather, Water and Climate Services*
Science Applications International
Corporation

Peter Casals
Deputy Director
International Association of
Emergency Managers

Walter Dabberdt
Director of Strategic Research
Vaisala Inc.

Timothy Killeen
Director
National Center for Atmospheric
Research

Neal Lane
Professor and Senior Fellow
Rice University

Frank Nutter
President
Reinsurance Association
of America

Len Pietrafesa
Director
Office of External Affairs North
Carolina State University

Maria Pirone
*Vice President for Product
Development*
Atmospheric and Environmental
Research (AER) Inc.

Timothy Reinhold
Vice President for Engineering
Institute for Business & Home Safety

Jeremy Usher
President and CEO
Weathernews, Inc.

David Whelan
*Vice President, General Manager and
Deputy to the President*
Boeing Phantom Works

Brigadier General David L. Johnson,
Assistant Administrator for Weather Services
National Weather Service
Partnership Policy, Room 11426
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
1325 East-West Highway,
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3283

Dear General Johnson:

As the co-chairs of the Weather Coalition, we write to offer our comments on the proposed clarification to NOAA's "Policy on Partnerships in the Provision of Environmental Information" published in the Federal Register on August 4, 2005. The Weather Coalition is a diverse group of representatives from industry, academia, science and education consortia and a national laboratory (see attached membership list). We are committed to working together to improve the capabilities of the country's weather prediction and warning capabilities.

In general, the Coalition supports this policy, and applauds NOAA's spirit of working with the external community. The Weather Coalition appreciates that NOAA is committed to open consultation with all who are affected by NOAA's services including the private sector. We note that NOAA has said it will use a variety of mechanisms to consult openly on these matters as it moves forward. Section 5.c. of the policy states that NOAA will "[seek] advice on specific matters of concern in accord with the Federal Advisory Committee Act." The Coalition believes that meaningful consultation is important for all of NOAA's activities – especially those of the National Weather Service (NWS). As a result, the Weather Coalition believes strongly that, consistent with NOAA's newly revised partnership policy, the NWS should establish a federally chartered advisory committee. Such an advisory committee would assist the NWS in strengthening coordination and cooperation with the public and private sector.

Such a committee was recommended in the National Academy of Sciences' report entitled, *Fair Weather: Effective Partnerships in Weather and Climate Services (2003)*. The *Fair Weather* report concluded that the rapid changes in science and technology underlying weather and climate forecasting are likely to continue. "Therefore, the committee's primary conclusion is that it is counterproductive and diversionary to establish detailed and rigid boundaries for each sector outlining who can do what and with which tools. Instead, efforts should focus on improving the processes by which the public and private providers of weather services interact."

cc Cynthia Schmidt
P.O. Box 3000
Boulder, CO 80507-3000
303-497-2107

Page 2 of 2
BGen DL Johnson

The report goes on to recommend:

The NWS should establish an independent advisory committee to provide ongoing advice to it on weather and climate matters. The committee should be composed of users of weather and climate data and representatives of the public, private, and academic sectors, and it should consider issues relevant to each sector as well as to the set of players as a group, such as (but not limited to)

- *improving communication among the sectors,*
- *creating or discontinuing products,*
- *enhancing scientific and technical capabilities that support the NWS mission,*
- *improving data quality and timeliness, and*
- *disseminating data and information.*

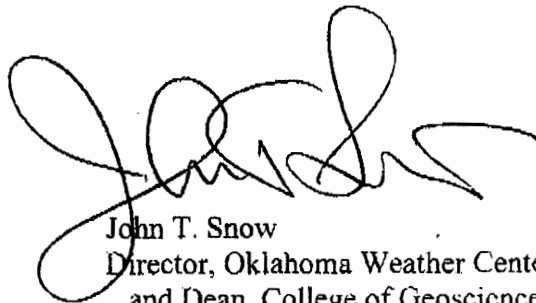
The various scientific venues (such as the new Commission on the Weather and Climate Enterprise established by the American Meteorological Society), NWS-sponsored user meetings, and the occasional forum on the public-private partnership are valuable and should be continued as part of the process for improving communication among the sectors. However, a federally chartered advisory committee would operate *within* the NWS policy-making process. This would allow for meaningful public-private coordination and cooperation with respect to the weather enterprise. The committee could help to coordinate federal and nongovernmental efforts in weather data gathering and dissemination with optimal efficiency. In turn, this would serve to reduce the current tensions between the external community and the agency, eventually leading to a more supportive NWS constituency. The end result will be a stronger and more effective NWS.

The Coalition reiterates its support for the proposed policy and appreciates the opportunity to provide comments. We hope you will consider our recommendations as you move forward in implementing the policy.

Sincerely,



Ray J. Ban
Executive Vice President
The Weather Channel



John T. Snow
Director, Oklahoma Weather Center
and Dean, College of Geosciences at
The University of Oklahoma

Co-Chairs of the Weather Coalition

attachment



THE WEATHER COALITION

University of Alabama at Huntsville
Department of Atmospheric Science

University of Albany, SUNY
Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences

American Geophysical Union

University of Arizona

Arizona State University

**Atmospheric and Environmental Research
(AER), Inc.**

Boeing Company

University of California at Los Angeles

Cornell University
Atmospheric Science Program

Florida State University
Center for Ocean-Atmospheric Prediction
Studies
Department of Meteorology

University of Hawaii
School of Ocean and Earth Sciences &
Technology

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Department of Atmospheric Sciences

Institute for Business and Home Safety

**International Association of Emergency
Managers**

Iowa State University
Office of the Vice Provost for Research

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Dept. of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary
Sciences

Meteorologix, LLC

University of Missouri – Columbia
Department of Atmospheric Sciences

**National Association of State Universities and
Land-Grant Colleges**

North Carolina State University
College of Mathematical & Physical Sciences

University of Oklahoma
Oklahoma Weather Center

Pennsylvania State University
Department of Meteorology

Purdue University
Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences

Raytheon Company

Reinsurance Association of America

Saint Louis University
Department of Earth and Atmospheric Science
Cooperative Institute for Precipitation Systems

**Science Applications International Corporation
(SAIC)**

University of Texas at Austin
Department of Geological Sciences

University Corporation for Atmospheric Research

University of Washington
Department of Atmospheric Sciences

Vaisala, Inc.

The Weather Channel, Inc.

Weathernews, Inc.