



July 6, 2017

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Shaheen:

The Water Utility Climate Alliance (WUCA), the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA), and the American Water Works Association (AWWA) strongly urge you to reject the President's proposed cut to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA) program. The President's FY18 Budget proposed a cut of 16% to the Regional Climate Data and Information budget line, which includes the RISA program, taking funding from \$37.9 million down to \$31.9 million. Such a large cut will severely harm the RISA program's ability to maintain critical research related to drinking water, coastal flooding, wildfires, drought preparedness, climate change adaptation, and public health.

WUCA, AMWA, and AWWA represent some of the largest water providers in the United States, and our organizations provide leadership in assessing and adapting to the potential effects of climate variability and change through collaborative action. RISA program research is vital to our members, who work to protect the nation's water supplies and plan, develop, and deliver high-quality drinking water.

RISA programs are regional, university-based efforts that help water utilities and numerous other entities incorporate critical scientific information on climate variability and change into management, operations, and planning. The RISA programs also collect, disseminate, and synthesize important data needed by water utilities to prepare for and adapt to hazards. The proposed cuts could jeopardize these programs that contribute to accurate short- and long-term weather forecasting and which enable communities to plan for and respond to extreme events including drought, wildfires, heat waves, flooding, and major storms.

As stewards of the environment and providers of critically important human health and safety resources, WUCA, AMWA and AWWA member utilities take extreme weather and climate impacts seriously. Preparing for hazards and adapting to climate change is a particularly important issue for maintaining water system resilience.

Your support for at least maintaining current funding levels for the Regional Climate Data and Information Program and for the RISA program in particular would be a significant step toward ensuring that we can continue to provide critical water service in spite of the effects of extreme weather and climate impacts, and the resulting hydrologic change that can negatively affect our water supply sources.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



John J. Entsminger
Executive Chair, WUCA
General Manager,
Southern Nevada Water
Authority



Diane VanDe Hei
CEO, AMWA



G. Tracy Mehan
Executive Director,
Government Affairs
AWWA