ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN WATER AGENCIES

LEADERS IN WATER

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The Honorable Ted Cruz
Chairman
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
Ranking Member
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brian Babin
Chairman
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member
Committee on Science, Space, and Technology
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cruz, Chairman Babin, and Ranking Member Cantwell, and Ranking Member Lofgren,

The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) strongly objects to any effort to defund, dismantle or weaken the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR). As a world-class research institution, NCAR plays a vital role in advancing climate and weather science with direct and far-reaching implications for water management across the country. Its work supports critical functions, such as flood and drought forecasting, climate modeling, streamflow assessments, and research on atmospheric rivers, that are essential for managing and allocating increasingly scarce water supplies. These capabilities are especially in the face of changing weather patterns and the growing frequency and intensity of extreme events, including fires, hurricanes, tornadoes, droughts, floods, and severe storms.

AMWA is an organization of the largest publicly owned drinking water systems in the United States. Member utilities collectively provide clean drinking water to over 160 million people across the nation. AMWA's members regard NCAR as one of the most trusted and well-respected voices on weather, atmospheric and climate science, and as an invaluable partner to water utilities as they assess their vulnerability to changes in the intensity and frequency of extreme weather events and changes in weather, precipitation, and hydrologic systems. AMWA members rely on NCAR's expertise to inform critical planning and decision-making and to carry out their core mission of delivering clean, dependable drinking water to the communities they serve.

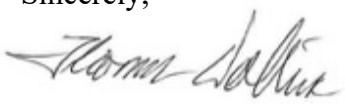
NCAR provides a suite of applied research, modeling, and data capabilities that are essential to drinking water utilities and demonstrate the practical value of federally funded atmospheric and climate science, including:

- **Informing utility planning and operations.** NCAR's research on atmospheric rivers – one of the largest drivers of catastrophic flooding – and advances in streamflow forecasting for snowpack, runoff, and seasonal flows, provides utilities with actionable information to guide infrastructure design, reservoir operations, and demand management.
- **Saving lives and protecting property through operational hydrologic forecasting**. NCAR developed and maintains WRF-Hydro, the community hydrologic modeling system that underpins NOAA's National Water Model, which is the backbone for nationwide streamflow and flood guidance across approximately 2.7 million river reaches. Weakening NCAR would directly undermine the flood and drought intelligence relied upon by water utilities and emergency managers nationwide.
- **Supporting long-range water supply and infrastructure planning**. NCAR's Community Earth System Model (CESM) enables utilities and states to evaluate credible ranges of future hydrologic conditions. NCAR's recent work evaluated CESM from a water manager perspective, adding explicit human water use modules directly relevant to western water scarcity.
- **Producing authoritative reports and syntheses crucial to understanding major river systems**. These assessments integrate atmospheric science, hydrology, and water management insights, enabling utilities and policymakers to make informed decisions on allocation, infrastructure, and long-term resilience. A leading example is the 'Colorado River Basin Climate and Hydrology: State of the Science' report, widely considered the preeminent scientific report on the Colorado River.
- **Providing world-class computing that makes actionable water intelligence possible**. NCAR's Derecho supercomputer – a 19.87 petaflop, GPU-accelerated system – supports high-resolution modeling, data assimilation, and machine learning essential to hydrologic forecasting and extreme-event prediction. Dismantling NCAR would strand this major public investment and disrupt models critical to water planning in complex terrain.
- **Maintaining open, trusted data platforms used by water managers nationwide.** NCAR's Research Data Archive (RDA), Geoscience Data Exchange (GDEX), and the Climate Data Guide are trusted, expert-curated sources for re-analyses, climate indices, and down-scaled products that are core to utility planning efforts. Defunding NCAR would jeopardize their accessibility, quality, and long-term stewardship.
- **Bridging research and operations across federal, regional, and local partners.** NCAR partners with NOAA's National Water Center, collaborates with regional entities like the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes (CW3E), and partners directly with local water utilities. These collaborations ensure that cutting-edge weather and hydrologic science is translated into practical tools that support real-world water management and operations.

Defunding or dismantling NCAR would cause immediate and lasting harm to the nation's drinking water systems by weakening the forecasting, modeling, data, and scientific partnerships that utilities rely on to deliver safe, reliable water services. Such actions would disrupt operational flood and drought intelligence, jeopardize federally funded high-performance computing and data assets, and sever collaborations that directly support water supply planning, infrastructure protection, and emergency response. A resilient and affordable drinking water supply is foundational to public health, economic stability, and national competitiveness. Undermining NCAR would make it more difficult and costly for utilities to plan for increasing climate and weather risks, ultimately exposing communities and ratepayers to greater service disruptions and higher long-term costs.

Thank you for your attention to this crucial issue. If you have any questions, please contact Liz Jordan (jordan@amwa.net), AMWA's Manager of Sustainability and Resilience Policy.

Sincerely,



Tom Dobbins
Chief Executive Officer