

OPENING STATEMENT

Ranking Member Eddie Bernice Johnson

House Committee on Science, Space, and Technology

Subcommittee on Environment

Subcommittee on Oversight

“An Overview of the Nation’s Weather Satellite Programs and Policies”

December 10, 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and welcome to our witnesses. I am looking forward to hearing your insights and updates on these important satellite programs – J-P-S-S and GOES-R. Since I am the last to speak, I’ll be brief. These two programs will play a critical role in ensuring the continued health of our weather forecasting capability, and they both have been a key area of bipartisan oversight for the Committee.

It is important for Congress to continue to work with NOAA and NASA to ensure that these programs are fielded successfully, and as quickly, as possible to mitigate any potential gaps in satellite coverage.

Unfortunately, since their inception, both satellite programs have been plagued by management and technical challenges, and I’ve personally seen how the programs’ cost growth has impacted the budgets of NOAA’s other important activities.

After our hearing on this issue in February, I was feeling guardedly optimistic that sufficient progress was being made and that the successful launch of GOES-R was in sight. However, based on the testimony GAO will provide today, it is clear that more will need to be done to ensure the successful and timely completion of these critically important satellites. We must take all necessary steps to ensure there is not a gap in satellite coverage and our weather capabilities. American lives and livelihoods depend on it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and I yield back the balance of my time.