Summary of AMS BEC telecom on follow-up to Congressional visits.

Comments to: Betsy Weatherhead (betsy.weatherhead@colorado.edu)

Background: On September 12, 2012 a delegation of 29 scientists and weather affiliates represented the American Meteorological Society and University Corporation for Atmospheric Research as a part of the GEO-Congressional Visits Day. The delegation, led by Betsy Weatherhead, U. Colorado, visited over fifty offices, speaking with congressional staff, congressmen/women and senators. The following represents the after-visit discussions on lessons learned and next steps that took place on September 19, 2012.

Lessons learned: what worked /what didn’t work

The effort was pulled together very quickly and was an unqualified success. The visits were received with response ranging from cordiality to enthusiasm and appreciation. A general conclusion was that we should have been doing this earlier and we should continue to do this more often.

The one-page summary that the weather enterprise is working and is important for the economy was well received and was the right message, carried at roughly the right level of detail. Some staffers asked for more detail on Jeff Lazo’s paper on the amount of GDP that varies with weather variations. In the future, messaging and asks—if there are any—should be prepared weeks in advance and cleared by the entire delegation.

Having delegates from private industry was useful and powerful.

The biggest lesson learned was that we need to have more preparation time. Delegates should be fully identified, including bio’s home states, zip codes, and interests three weeks in advance. Mike Henry, Caitlyn Buzzas, Tom Fahy, Ellen Klicka, and Scott Carter worked hard and long in the short time we had to prepare for things this year. However, more time would allow those setting up the visits to proceed in a more professional, less rushed manner. Additional time would also allow the delegates to have advanced warning on which congressional offices they will visit.

The dinner on the evening prior, arranged by Tom Fahy and hosted by Bill Gail, Bill Callahan, Bruce Thomas and Peter Neilley was very useful in bringing the entire delegation onto the same message and allowed for last minute coordination of how the congressional visits day would work. In the future, preparing delegates better would help the entire effort. One possibility is to take advantage of the GEO-CVD day-prior briefing which was very useful for the AMS delegates who attended.

Information gathered
Interesting and potentially useful information was gathered from the office.

John Kerry’s office is working on a weather resilience bill and staffers asked for Bill Callahan and Peter Neilley to help them in the effort.

Legislative Director Matt Henken, LA for Congressman Perlmutter, suggested that we hold a weather day, where we can educate the congressional members on aspects of the weather enterprise.

Congressman John Boehner is a personal fan of weather.

The Roll Call article in investment in science had already made an impression on many of the congressional staff.

It was suggested that we brief OMB—perhaps after the election.

Most congressional staff don’t know what the weather enterprise is, but after being briefed very much like the idea of public/private/academic communities working togheter.

Barry Myers often used statement of “We have the best weather enterprise in the world.” Made a strong positive impression.

Betsy Weatherhead’s occasionally used statement that the US no longer has the best weather forecast in the world also made a strong impact.

Bruce Thomas’ statement that the weather enterprise and NOAA act as the coast guard for securing the country with respect to severe weather worked well.

Bill Callahan and Peter Neilley’s statement, “364 days of the year we are direct competitors; today we are here, united in our desire to see a strong healthy weather enterprise go forward.” had a very strong impact.

Key follow-up actions with individual offices

AMS/UCAR delegates are encouraged to write follow-up emails within ten days following the congressional visits. Only one person from each of the seven groups we had visiting offices should write the email, thus there should be some coordination to make sure the emails are written. Sample email text crafted by Scott Carter could be the following. Mike Henry suggests editing this down to just two of the most relevant paragraphs and one attachment.

<<<Name of staffer and use First name,>>>  

We wanted to say thank you for your time on September 12 to discuss the importance of supporting the infrastructure of the Nation’s Weather Enterprise that supports some of the Nation’s largest industries including agriculture, transportation, tourism, and others/or directly affects over half of the Nation’s economy.
Enclosed you will find the information we discussed describe relevance/why you are providing/other for personal touch and to recall the meeting discussion. In addition, I appreciated your thoughts on try to add some other issue you may have discussed, ie. “on the challenges facing Congress and your willingness to discuss the issue with the Congressman/Woman”.

We also wanted to invite you to attend an event sponsored by UCAR/AMS on the future of the Nation's Weather Enterprise in RHOB room.

If you have any questions on the enclosed material or if any additional questions arise, feel free to contact us at.

Thank you.

The following documents may be useful as attachments:

- Jeff Lazo’s paper explaining how much of the US economy is sensitive to weather variability
- The “cloud” one pager saying that the weather enterprise is critical infrastructure for the country
- The invitation to the Sep 27 Hill event to roll out the weather commission idea.

Each of these is available in subsequent emails or directly from Betsy.

**Strategic next steps.**

As successful as the visits on September 12th were, these are viewed as the start of a relationship. Strategic next steps focus on strengthening the relationships and educating congress.

Visiting local congressional offices was viewed as a powerful way to strengthen relationships and have potential for in depth communication.

It was agreed that two visits a year—one in the autumn in conjunction with GEO-CVD (Congressional Visits Day) and one in the spring, would be useful, pending approvals from AMS and UCAR. Most attendants on the call agreed that either they or their company would sponsor participation in two visits per year.

Establishing an action team to reach out to staffers after a major weather event was viewed as a good idea. This would take some time, organization and clear messaging, but this was viewed as an important and useful path forward.

Scott Rayder’s idea to form a weather coalition was discussed and put forward as something we can all promote. A meeting will be held on September 27 in 2325 Rayburn to communicate the idea.

A briefing of OMB after the election was considered a wise path forward, but would take some level of coordination.
We need to continue to tie the congressional visits to broad messages developed at the Washington Forum or the Summer Community Meeting. Specific briefings on topics such as space weather or hurricane forecasting may be useful but offer their own sets of sensitivities.

Brown bag briefings are a potentially useful method for communicating in the future.
Appendices:

Tuesday, September 11, 2012
noon-5pm  1307 NY Ave., NW, First Floor Conference room.
6pm dinner for AMS delegates at Washington Marriott (12th and H Streets, NW)

Wednesday, September 12, 2012
9am-5pm  Congressional visits - your handler and list of offices will be assigned on Tuesday
5:30 - 7:30 Reception at Rayburn House Office Building Foyer

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AMS/UCAR Team 1:

Betsy Weatherhead, Barry Myers

CO/PA

10 meetings

Mike Henry

Meeting 1: Cat Barrett, Professional Staff for Senate Commerce Committee, 425 Hart (Mike H.)

Meeting 2: Jimmy Hague, LA for Senator Udall (D-CO), 328 Hart (Mike H.)

Meeting 3: Sean Babington, LA for Senator Bennet (D-CO), Colorado Coffee Mixer, 432 Russell, Contact: Rebecca Ontoviros-Chavez (Mike H.)

Meeting 4: Dick Spiegelman, LD for Senator Bob Casey (D-PA), 393 Russell (Mike H.)

Meeting 5: Mallori McClure, LA for Congressman Doug Lamborn (D-CO), 437 Cannon (Mike H.)

Meeting 6: Courtney Krause, LA for Congressman Jared Polis (D-CO), 501 Cannon (Mike H.)

Meeting 7: Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-PA-2) Ranking CJS Approps Staff 2301 Rayburn 202-255-4001 (Mike H.)

Meeting 8: Matt Henken, LA for Congressman Ed Perlmutter (D-CO), 1221 Longworth (Mike H.)

Meeting 9: Congressman Glenn Thompson (R-PA), with LA John Busovsky, 124 Cannon (Mike H.)

Meeting 10: Philip Newman, LA for Congressman Cory Gardner (R-CO), 213 Cannon (Mike H.)
AMS/UCAR team 2: Bruce Thomas, Bill Gail, Tom Fahy

KS/MO/CO/VA

8 meetings

Tom Fahy

Meeting 1: Barry Londeree, LA Jim Moran (D-VA-8) 2239 Rayburn 202-225-4376 (CB)


Meeting 3: Gary Gorski, LA for Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO), 506 Hart, (202) 224-6154 (Ellen)

Meeting 4: Thomas King, Sen. Warner (D-VA), 475 Russell, 202-224-2023 (CB)


Meeting 6: Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kansas), LA Darin Guries, 109 Hart, (202) 224-4774 (Ellen)

Meeting 7: Sara Brown, Sen. Jim Webb (D-VA), 248 Russell, 202-224-4024 (CB)

Meeting 8: Jack Ruddy, LA for Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO-6). Covers trade, energy, environment, interior, labor and agriculture Longworth 1415 202-225-7041 (Ellen)
AMS/UCAR Team 3: Joel Widder, Sharon Abbas

DC/MD

7 meetings

Joel Widder

Meeting 1: Cat Barrett, Professional Staff for Senate Commerce Committee, 425 Hart (Mike H.)


Meeting 3: "James Rice, LA for Sen. Charles Grassley (R-IA), who is on Ag Comm. 135 Hart (202) 224-3744 (Ellen)

Meeting 4: Kolo Rathburn, LA Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS) Dirksen 555 202-224-6253 (CB)

Meeting 5: Sen. Thad Cochran (R-MS) Dirksen 113. Meeting is on Senator's schedule but if he can't make it, an LA will take his place (no name available) (Ellen)

Meeting 6: Jason Park, LA for Sen. Patty Murray (D-WA). Murray is on Approps Comm. 448 Russell. (202) 224-2621 (Ellen)

Meeting 7: Jamal Halepota, LA Sen. Kristen Gillibrand (D-NY) Russell 478 202-224-4451 (SC)
Meeting 1: Cat Barrett, Professional Staff for Senate Commerce Committee, 425 Hart (Mike H.)

Meeting 2: Michael Quiello, LA for Sen. Isakson (R-GA), Russell 416, 202-224-3521 (CB)

Meeting 3: "10:45 Eric Heighberger, Professional Staff Member, Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, 442 Hart (SC)

Meeting 4: Rachel McGlocklin LA for Sen. Saxby Chambliss (R-GA) 416 Russell 202-224-3521 (CB)


Meeting 6: "M.V. Young, LA for Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL), covers weather and environment, Russell 304, (202)-224-5744 (Ellen)


Meeting 8: Nathan Taylor, LA Jon Tester (D-MT) Hart 724 202-224-3015 (CB)
AMS/UCAR Team 5: Jim Brylawski, Ron McHenry

MD/NJ

8 meetings

Scott Carter


Meeting 2: Jimmy Fremgen, LA for Rep. Elijah Cummings, (D-MD-7), Rayburn 2235, (202) 225-4741 (Ellen)

Meeting 3: 10:40-11:00 Mary Frances Repko, Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD-5), 1705 Longworth. (202) 225-4131 (Ellen)

Meeting 4: Rep. Roscoe Bartlett (R-MD-6), 2412 Rayburn, Faye Powers also attending. (202) 225-2721 (Ellen)


Meeting 6: Leslie Albright and Bob Bonner, House Appropriations CJS Subcomm Staff. House CB-309, (202) 225-3351 (Ellen)


Meeting 8: House AG: HOLD
AMS/UCAR Team 6: Curt Barrett, Ken Carey, John E. Jones

MD

7 meetings

Phil Bye


Meeting 2: CoS for Congressman C.W. Bill Young (R-FL-10), 2407 Rayburn, 202-255-5961(SC) Scott will staff

Meeting 3: William Mowitt LA, Begich (AK-D) and Cat Barrett, CST SubCom on Oceans Staff. Russell 111 202-224-3004 (CB)


Meeting 5: (1:45pm) Rep. Sablan (Natural Resources Committee, Subcommitee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs), 423 Cannon, 202-255-2646 (SC)


Meeting 7: Gray Maxwell, LD for Senator Ben Cardin (D-MD), 509 Hart (Mike H.)
AMS/UCAR Team 7: Sara Lipsy, Dennis Nicks

CO

11 meetings

Ellen Klicka

**Meeting 1:** Cat Barrett, Professional Staff for Senate Commerce Committee, 425 Hart (Mike H.)

**Meeting 2:** Jimmy Hague, LA for Senator Udall (D-CO), 328 Hart (Mike H.)

**Meeting 3:** Sean Babington, LA for Senator Bennet (D-CO), Colorado Coffee Mixer, 432 Russell, Contact: Rebecca Ontoviros-Chavez (Mike H.)

**Meeting 4:** Abby Tinsley and Nick Cumming LA for Sen. Bill Nelson (D-FL) Hart 716 202-224-5274 (CB)

**Meeting 5:** Jeremy Price, CJS Approps staff for Sen. Murkowski (R-AK) Hart 709 202-224-6665 (SC)

**Meeting 6:** Jeremy Baker, LA Patrick Toomey (R-PA) 502 Hart 202-224-4254 (Mike H.)

**Meeting 7:** Eric Werwa, Legislative Director, Rep.

**Meeting 8:** Mike Honda (D-CA-15). 1713 Longworth (202) 225-2631 (Ellen)"

**Meeting 9:** Courtney Krause, LA for Congressman Jared Polis (D-CO), 501 Cannon (Mike H.)

**Meeting 10:** Eleanor Bastian, LA for Congresswoman DeGette (D-CO), 2335 Rayburn (Mike H.)

**Meeting 11:** Matt Henken, LA for Congressman Ed Perlmutter (D-CO), 1221 Longworth (Mike H.)

**Meeting 12:** Philip Newman, LA for Congressman Cory Gardner (R-CO), 213 Cannon (Mike H.)