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September 9, 2025

United States House of Representatives
The Honorable Brian Babin
The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Committee on Science, Space and Technology
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Support for H.R. 5089 Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2025

Dear House Science, Space and Technology Chair Babin and Ranking Member Lofgren:

Membership in the Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP) consists of state and interstate water resources management agencies. As the House Science, Space and Technology Committee considers HR 5089, the Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2025, ICWP recommends to: 1) formally designate the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) to function as an operational program under the National Weather Service, and 2) underscore the important provisions in the bill in support of the National Water Center and the Precipitation Forecast Improvement Program.

1) Reauthorize NIDIS and designate it as an operational program under the National Weather Service

NIDIS is an essential partner for state, interstate, and regional water managers, serving as a respected coordinating body that develops enhanced resources for decision-makers and facilitates prompt responses to drought conditions by collecting, integrating, and disseminating drought information. The program is well-regarded for its effective federal-state collaboration and focus on converting data into actionable strategies. Established under the NIDIS Act of 2006 through NOAA's National Weather Service (Public Law 109-430), NIDIS received bipartisan reauthorization in both 2014 and 2019.

Currently, NIDIS operates within NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research. Given that the National Weather Service already manages 122 Weather Forecast Offices and 13 River Forecast Centers, and considering NIDIS's complementary role in drought forecasting and communication, ICWP recommends that in HR 5089 the committee directs NIDIS to formally function under the operational division of the National Weather Service, as initially intended by its authorizing legislation.

ICWP continues our support for enhanced drought monitoring, improved research coordination, and strengthened water management capabilities at all levels of government. We strongly support timely reauthorization of NIDIS via Section 502 of HR 5089, recognizing its pivotal role in advancing national drought preparedness for the nation.

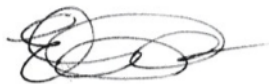
2) Prioritize National Water Center and Precipitation Forecasting

Section 505: National Water Center (NWC) – Section 505 of HR 5809 reauthorizes the activities of the National Water Center (NWC) and designates the Center as NOAA's primary center in collaborating and coordinating water research and operational activities with other Federal centers and networks. Doing so will centralize research and operations in support of important NWC functions. Please retain this important provision.

Section 501: Weather and climate information in agriculture and water management – Water supply, drought planning and reservoir operations criteria are informed by hydrologic forecasts made at multiple timescales. Longer precipitation forecast lead times are critical for efficiently managing river systems under challenging conditions and mitigating shortage risks in all regions of the United States. ICWP supports the provisions in Section 501 of HR 5809 for improved subseasonal to seasonal precipitation forecasting.

For more details about the relevance of NIDIS, the NWC, and forecasting to members of the water resource management community, please contact Beth@icwp.org or 307-772-1999.

Regards,



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CC:

Veva DeHeza, Executive Director, National Integrated Drought Information System