



NOAA Environmental Data:

# Foundation for Earth Observations and Data Management System

U.S. Department of Commerce  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
Washington, D.C. 20230

July 2003

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July 31, 2003

The Honorable Sherwood Boehlert  
Chairman, Committee on Science  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am transmitting the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Report to Congress, *NOAA Environmental Data: Foundation for Earth Observations and Data Management System*. This document was produced in compliance with Public Law 102-567, NOAA's FY 1992 Authorization Act.

Within the Department of Commerce, NOAA has the unique federal mission of archiving and making accessible the Nation's environmental data in support of environmentally dependent economic decisions and critical research, such as understanding the climate. Observations are intrinsic to NOAA's mission. NOAA has a vision to see a truly integrated global observing system that will integrate all aspects of environmental monitoring on common platforms, to ensure data quality, to manage data efficiently for the long term, and to make these data easily and readily accessible as needed. NOAA carries out this mission through its National Data Centers, which collectively manage the largest, most accessed collection of atmospheric, oceanographic, and geophysical data in the world. These data and information products are available to the Nation as part of a national decision support system that contributes to operations that save lives, protect property, and contribute to the economic well-being and quality of life in the United States.

Throughout the 1990s and into the new century, the NOAA archives, consisting of a primary and backup copy of our environmental data, have experienced a steady growth increasing from less than 0.2 petabytes in 1992, to more than 1.4 petabytes in 2002. By 2017, NOAA's data holdings are expected to exceed 140 petabytes. The Internet has facilitated an unprecedented increase in the number of users who request archive access to NOAA environmental data and information. These archive and usage trends are expected to continue for the foreseeable future.

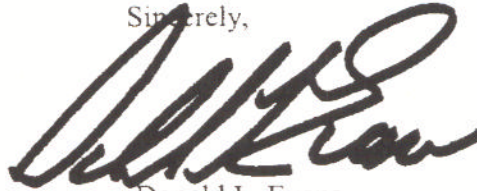
The Honorable Sherwood Boehlert

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At the same time, over the past decade, NOAA has made great strides with respect to its data management mission. This document updates the progress made and defines the courses of action to be taken to ensure that we will be able to continue to preserve and provide access to this wealth of important environmental data for the Nation.

If you have any questions, please contact me or Brenda Becker, Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Evans", written in a cursive style.

Donald L. Evans

Enclosure



July 31, 2003

The Honorable John McCain  
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science  
and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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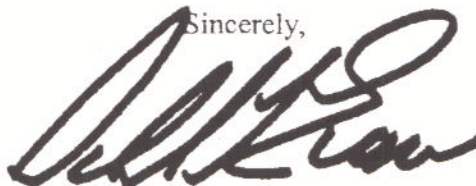
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Donald L. Evans

Enclosure

Identical letters were sent to:

The Honorable Ralph M. Hall  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Science  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515-6017

The Honorable Ernest F. Hollings  
Ranking Minority Member  
Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

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