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U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP)
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric
Research (OAR)
Department of Commerce (DOC)
Washington, DC

Subject: Response to Draft Prospectus of the Fifth National Climate Assessment:

Electronic Submission: <https://www.globalchange.gov/content/call-public-comment-draft-prospectus-fifth-national-climate-assessment-nca5>

The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) appreciates the U.S. Global Change Research Program (USGCRP) seeking public comment on the proposed themes and framework of the Fifth National Climate Assessment (NCA5). AAAS is the world's largest general scientific society and publisher of the *Science* family of journals, with the mission to advance science, engineering and innovation throughout the world for the benefit of all people. We support the National Climate Assessment and the work of scientists at federal agencies, national labs and academic institutions who provide significant research findings that increase our understanding of how climate change is affecting the United States and the world. The science on climate is clear, and we must face the facts in order to address the risks.

In general, AAAS supports the overall approach for the NCA5 framework and is especially pleased to see that the USGCRP plans to include regional analyses in the next assessment. The risks and impacts of a changing climate vary across regions, states and localities and the needs and opportunities to adapt to and mitigate climate change are dependent on subnational factors.

While we are supportive of the overall general approach, we do have some concerns regarding part 5 of the proposed framework, on the "Information Needed to Support Climate Change Adaptation, Increased Resiliency, and Risk Reduction." A fundamental and impactful element of past National Climate Assessments has been this section which addresses climate change adaptation and mitigation. Previous assessments have included both an evaluation of the needs for adaptation and mitigation *and* a survey of measures being implemented at local, state, regional, and national levels.

However, this new prospectus for the NCA5 notes that there may be a review of case studies "where relevant." This is quite different from a more comprehensive review of the types of measures that are ongoing and how they are being implemented. A more comprehensive review would catalog the ways in which such measures are addressing targets like reducing risk from current impacts and changes that are "baked in" to the system by past emissions and reducing the magnitude of change and severity of future impacts by cutting emissions. In other words, comprehensive reviews lead to the type of information from real world examples that



provide critical insight to the impacts of a changing climate, how to address them, and provide a solid basis for decision making without endorsing specific policy choices.

Despite the importance and effectiveness of a comprehensive review of case studies on adaption and mitigation, this component is not mandatory in the NCA5 thus leaving it susceptible to change or exclusion entirely. Due to its usefulness to the nation, states and local communities, USGCRP should codify the provision into the NCA5 framework in order that regions and states across the country can continue reaping the benefits of scientific information into how climate change impacts their communities and the effective ways in which they may mitigate and/or adapt to these changes.

Scientifically accurate information builds the foundation for public policies that promote the well-being of people and communities. AAAS thanks the USGCRP for seeking the input from stakeholders on this critical issue. We will continue to advocate that decision-makers at all levels – local, state, regional and national – use scientific evidence as the basis for identifying opportunities for communities to respond effectively to climate change. AAAS and the scientific community stand ready to help inform and collaborate with NOAA and other federal agencies and decision-makers.

Sincerely,

Sudip Parikh
AAAS CEO and Executive Publisher