The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is requesting public comment on a newly drafted policy governing NOAA's National Weather Service interactions and cooperation with the greater consortium of public, private and academic weather and climate institutions. NOAA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

"This draft policy affirms NOAA's commitment to continue working with our partners in the private sector, the media, and the academic community to provide weather and climate services to serve America," said retired Navy VADM Conrad Lautenbacher, PhD, under secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere and NOAA administrator. "NOAA will continue to provide services that are vital to public safety and economic well being, but we can all benefit by establishing better relationships and building better institutions to coordinate our roles, reduce misunderstandings and maximize the effectiveness of our shared weather and climate enterprise."

The new policy was prompted by the 2002 publication of The National Research Council's (NRC) "Fair Weather: Effective Partnerships in Weather and Climate Services." The NRC study commended the three-sector system for leading to an excellent array of products and services to benefit the nation's economy. The study recommended the National Weather Service replace its 1991 public-private partnership policy with a policy that defines processes for making decisions on products, technologies and services, rather than rigidly defining the roles of the National Weather Service and the private sector.

In response to these recommendations, the National Weather Service developed the draft "Fair Weather" policy which is now available for public comment.

Lautenbacher said he hoped all interested parties would read the policy and provide NOAA with comments and insights that will help develop the best possible policies to guide the National Weather Service and other related NOAA efforts.

The Commerce Department's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) is dedicated to enhancing economic security and national safety through the prediction and research of weather and climate-related events and providing environmental stewardship of our nation's coastal and marine resources. To learn more about NOAA, please visit http://www.noaa.gov.

The NRC Fair Weather study is available at
http://books.nap.edu/catalog/10610.html

The draft NOAA Partnership policy is available in electronic form at http://www.nws.noaa.gov/fairweather or in writing through:

Fair Weather
Strategic Planning and Policy Office
NOAA National Weather Service
1325 East-West Highway, Room 11404
Silver Spring, MD 20910-3283