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**U.S. Commerce Deputy Secretary David A. Sampson Remarks
at the National Council of Industrial Meteorologists (NCIM)
Midyear Meeting
San Antonio, Texas**

Good afternoon and thank you for asking me to come today. I'm honored to be here. I want to briefly make two points.

First, I want to thank the Council and all of you here today for your steadfast support. I think the public-private partnership between NOAA and the Council is one of the best I've seen. You have a focused, common purpose and the highest professional standards of anyone in the forecasting business.

Through your training programs, your leadership in the American Meteorology Society (AMS) and your partnership with NOAA, you are truly making a difference.

Your work is improving the quality of life for Americans and for people around the world. And you are helping our economy grow and create jobs through your forecasts by limiting the damage that bad weather can cause.

I also want to affirm our policy that the free exchange of ideas and information encourages scientific progress. NOAA stands for scientific integrity. And NOAA is, and should always be, a free and open organization.

We strongly support a culture of openness at NOAA and at all Commerce's research facilities. People need to freely discuss their work and ideas with colleagues and the public. This is critical to retaining our leadership position as the most innovative nation on earth.

Innovation is an American tradition and the secret to our economic success. It would not be in our interest to do anything that stifles our ability to innovate.

So I thank you for your leadership, for your professionalism and your dedication. We're honored to have you as partners and we look forward to continued success in the future.

Thank you very much.