CONGRESSMAN ALAN B. MOLLOHAN, CHAIRMAN

HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, JUSTICE, SCIENCE & RELATED AGENCIES

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Opening Statement of Chairman Alan B. Mollohan

Critical Satellite Climate Change Datasets – Morning Hearing

Good morning, Dr. Tucker and Dr. Bindschadler, and welcome before the Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee. We appreciate you coming today to help us understand the requirements for long-term satellite observations to support the understanding, prediction and monitoring of climate change and the specific characteristics required of the systems that provide them. Requirements for precision, accuracy, calibration, and continuity influence costs, but meeting these requirements is critical to getting value from investments in Earth observations. For example, the just enacted Omnibus Appropriation for Fiscal Year 2009 provides $74 million to restore two climate instruments to the payload of the NPOESS satellite, and $150 million to accelerate development of Earth observation satellites recommended by the National Research Council..

We have asked each of you to focus on the critical insight into climate change contributed by particular satellite observations together with ground-based measurements. Dr. Tucker, we've asked you to cover vegetation data, an example of which is on the wall behind me. I believe that you were the scientist who devised the normalized difference vegetation index that has provided great insight from NOAA AVHRR data. Dr. Bindschadler, you have dedicated many years to the study of ice sheets, and we have asked you to cover their observation including the ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctic that figure prominently in potential future sea level rise.

Your written statements will be entered in the record, but before I call for your oral statements, I recognize Mr. Wolf, the ranking member of this subcommittee for his opening statement.