

Commerce Sec. Locke launches new 'Climate Dashboard' to track climate change

By Agri-Pulse Staff

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Washington, Feb. 12 – Commerce Secretary Gary Locke announced plans this week to create a new “Climate Service” run by NOAA, the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration. The new service is aimed at providing current, accurate information because “Individuals and decision-makers across widely diverse sectors – from agriculture to energy to transportation – increasingly are asking NOAA for information about climate change.”

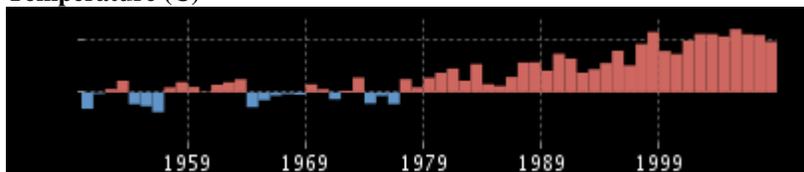
Along with a wide range of data and information sources, NOAA’s new “Climate Portal” on the web at www.climate.gov/ includes these hard-to-dispute charts in its Global Climate Dashboard:

Climate Change – Climate Variability

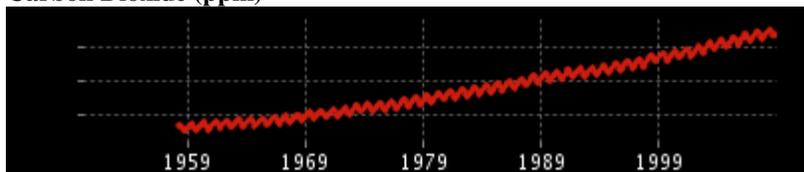
1950

2008

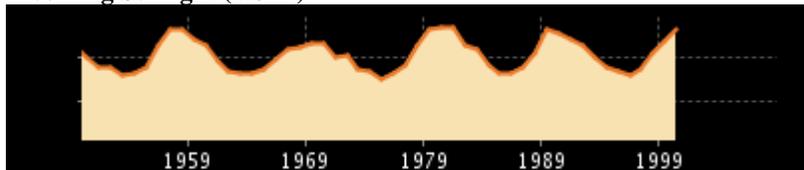
Temperature (C)



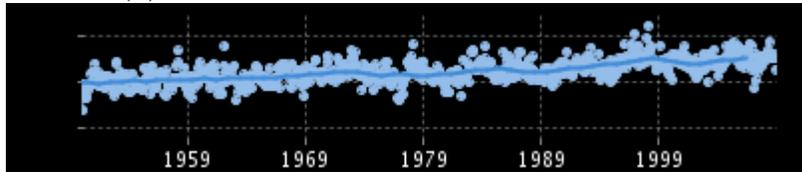
Carbon Dioxide (ppm)



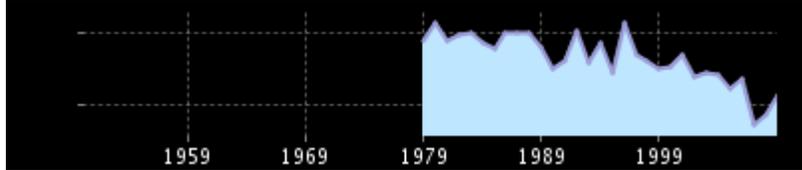
Incoming Sunlight (W/m²)



Sea Level (ft)



Arctic Sea Ice (annual min. in million km²)



Source: National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), U.S. Department of Commerce

Pointing to sea-level rise, longer growing seasons, changes in river flows, increases in heavy downpours, earlier snowmelt and extended ice-free seasons in U.S. waters, Commerce Secretary Gary Locke explained that “By providing critical planning information that our businesses and our communities need, NOAA Climate Service will help tackle head-on the challenges of mitigating and adapting to climate change. In the process, we’ll discover new technologies, build new businesses and create new jobs.”

Duke Energy CEO Jim Rogers also cited economic reasons for providing the new service. He said “Addressing climate change is one of our most pressing environmental challenges. Making climate science more easily accessible to all Americans will help us gain the consensus we need to move forward. The new NOAA Climate Service is a welcome addition. It will help bring people together so we can also bring about an economic recovery by more rapidly modernizing our nation’s energy infrastructure.”

Launching NOAA’s new climate web site Monday, NOAA Administrator Jane Lubchenco said “More and more individuals – community planners, farmers, public health officials and small business owners – are seeking reliable, user-friendly climate data and information. We envision this climate portal as the first step toward making the wealth of climate information at NOAA available in one easy-to-use resource.”

Former EPA Administrator William Reilly welcomed the new service, commenting that “Both for making informed policy decisions based on sound science, and for helping governments and businesses plan to adapt to a warmer climate with its rising sea level, ready public access to credible information will be highly valuable.”

Richard L. Sandor, Chair of the Chicago Climate Exchange which has created a new income stream for farmers selling carbon credits traded on the CCX exchange, said “Market-based policies for clean energy and lower pollution have worked well in the United States, and access to superior climate and weather data can help them work even better. The NOAA Climate Service can be a key ingredient in building intelligent solutions to a wide range of global environmental risks.”

Reinsurance Association of America President Frank Nutter points out that “The insurance industry is heavily dependent on public data and information related to climate, and the creation of a NOAA Climate Service with new data services will greatly enhance the industry’s analysis of climate and extreme event weather risk.”

Half a century of tracking the costs of greenhouse gas emissions

- President Lyndon Johnson noted in a 1965 special address to Congress that, “. . . a steady increase in carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels has altered the composition of the atmosphere.”
- White House Science Advisor Dr. John Holdren testified in House climate change hearings last December that “. . . failure to act promptly to reduce global emissions to the atmosphere of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping substances is overwhelmingly likely to lead to changes in climate too extreme and too damaging to be adequately addressed by any adaptation measures that can be foreseen. . . as the world’s largest economy and preeminent source of scientific and technological innovation, we have the obligation and the opportunity to lead the world in demonstrating that the needed emissions reduction can be achieved in ways that are affordable and consistent with continued economic growth, that create new jobs, and that bring further co-benefits in the form of reduced oil import dependence and improved air quality.”

For coverage of agriculture and mining interests which discount concerns about climate change, go to: www.agri-pulse.com/uploaded/Feb1210H2.pdf.

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