

Published on *American Geosciences Institute* (<https://www.americangeosciences.org>)

Home > House, Senate question gaps in satellite weather data

House, Senate question gaps in satellite weather data

February 12, 2015

Concerns stemming from a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on weather satellites have caught the attention of the House Science, Space, and Technology (SST) Committee and Senate appropriators. The report suggests a potential gap in weather satellite data could last between 11 months and 5 years from when current satellites become nonfunctional to when new satellites are able to transmit calibrated data. The House SST Committee held a hearing to discuss the potential gaps in satellite data on February 12. Shortly thereafter, Senate appropriators expressed disappointment that the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) does not have a plan to mitigate the potential data gap.

In the House hearing, representatives from NOAA and NASA remained optimistic that the current satellite, Suomi-NPP, will remain functional longer than the GAO estimates and that the JPSS satellites will launch on schedule. Subcommittee Chairman Jim Bridenstine (R-OK) suggested that NOAA and NASA purchase verifiable data from commercial weather satellite data providers in the future, which would avoid potential gaps caused by relying on data from only one source. During the Senate budget hearing, Senator Richard Shelby (R-AL) criticized the agencies for their mixed messages about the gap and reinforced the concerns expressed by other members of Congress: “It is clear that loss of this data would negatively impact the capability of our nation's weather forecasters—potentially putting lives and property in harm's way.”

Source: E&E News
