

U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Nominations Hearing of Ms. Jainey Bavishi
November 17, 2021
Questions for the Record – Minority

Ranking Member Roger Wicker

Question 1: *I introduced and passed the bipartisan Modern Fish Act to improve the management of recreational fisheries by incorporating the best available science. In the Gulf of Mexico, states like Mississippi have invested significant time and money to develop a more accurate understanding of how much fish recreational fishermen harvest. Despite this effort, NOAA has proposed ignoring the more accurate and higher quality state data and treating the less accurate federal data from the Marine Recreational Information Program as though it is of equal quality. The calibration approach NOAA suggested was based on years 2017 and 2018, which if used would result in a 60 percent decline in Mississippi's recreational red snapper season. If NOAA had instead used 2020 to calibrate, Mississippi would see a 48 percent increase in their quota. How can our stakeholders have confidence in a federal data set that is neither accurate nor precise?*

Response:

If confirmed, I look forward to learning more about the red snapper fishery, which I know is of great economic and cultural significance to the state of Mississippi and the entire Gulf of Mexico region, and the Great Red Snapper Count, which I understand is being re-examined by the Gulf of Mexico Fisheries Management Council now. It is critical that NOAA base management decisions on the best peer reviewed scientific information available. I will commit to learning more about NOAA's Marine Recreational Information Program and to working with you and NOAA on this issue as the program pertains to Gulf of Mexico fisheries. If confirmed, I will work closely with National Marine Fisheries Assistant Administrator, Janet Coit, who brings state-level fisheries experience to the table from her work in Rhode Island, something that I believe is critical to red snapper and other fisheries deliberations.

Question 2: *NOAA has an important role to play with respect to climate science. The agency collects observations and data, conducts cutting edge science, and runs weather and climate models. However, the agency has no statutory role in regulating greenhouse gas emissions. How will you ensure that NOAA remains a science-based organization, and does not become an advocacy agency for a political agenda?*

Response:

Like President Biden, Secretary Raimondo, and Dr. Spinrad, I know that climate change poses an existential threat to communities across the country, and NOAA can meet this challenge by advancing environmental stewardship and economic opportunity. NOAA has the products and services to help communities address the climate crisis and become more resilient in the face of climate change. NOAA's products and services can support local, state, and Tribal governments, the private sector, and Federal agency partners to make informed decisions in the face of a changing climate.

Question 3: *Much of your career has been spent in New York City and DC. Rural areas have different needs and priorities than the cities. What steps do you plan to take to learn about the needs of places like Mississippi?*

Response:

If confirmed, I will draw on past experiences in rural areas, such as my work to support communities in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama recover from Hurricane Katrina. I also look forward to learning more about NOAA's work in supporting rural communities and how NOAA's products and services can continue to support economically, socially and environmentally vulnerable communities.

Senator Rick Scott

Question 1: Florida has experienced several hard-hitting hurricanes that devastated our communities. We know first-hand that preparedness saves lives, and NOAA's work to develop and improve weather predictive services has been critical to our preparedness efforts. How do you plan to improve NOAA's weather forecasting services to ensure families have the best information to stay safe?

Response:

Thank you, Senator, for your long-standing interest in, and support of, NOAA's hurricane preparedness, forecast, warning, and recovery mission. Hurricanes are one area that truly cuts across, and is supported by, everything that NOAA does: from observations to forecasts and warnings, to work with coastal communities, fisheries, and across the blue economy. I recognize the importance that weather has on industries to the economy of Florida and our nation, and to every individual's life and property. If confirmed, I will ensure that NOAA leads with data and sound science, and I look forward to working with you to ensure that NOAA and its National Weather Service are the gold standard for weather, water, and climate forecasting.