

March 11, 2026

Response to the NSF DCL: NSF Intent to Restructure Critical Weather Infrastructure

This response is submitted on behalf of the faculty, students, and researchers in the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Science at the University of Colorado Boulder and is supported and signed by our colleagues from 10 departments and 4 institutes across campus. This message represents the views of the signees and is not intended as an official statement on behalf of the university.

We have three simple messages.

- **We do not support breaking NCAR apart or moving it.** NCAR has served our national interests for decades by enabling big, effective, innovative, accessible, community-driven science and education aligned with NSF's mission. Keeping NCAR in Colorado and Wyoming as an integrated entity is cost-effective and provides continuity. NCAR should remain under NSF stewardship with strong university involvement. NCAR should not be managed by a non-NSF federal agency with a different mandate. NCAR should not be managed by a private for-profit organization or a mission-driven federal agency (NOAA, DOE, NASA).
- **If NSF breaks up NCAR, moves it, or considers new management – NSF should engage the university community.** As the university most closely connected to NCAR geographically and historically, we are prepared to work constructively with NSF and the broader scientific community in support of the national interest. CU has the proven capacity and expertise to manage large research infrastructure.
- **The Mesa Lab should remain as a public-facing center dedicated to innovation, research, and education in Earth system sciences.** We strongly oppose any effort to repurpose the Mesa Lab for private or non-scientific use. The land was donated to the NSF by the State of Colorado for science, specifically for NCAR. Water is only provided to the Mesa Lab due to a voter-approved exception to the "blue line law" of the City of Boulder. Selling or giving away the Mesa Lab for non-NCAR use violates the intent of Colorado's donation to NSF and local law.

Sincerely,

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