March 12, 2026

Dear NSF Office of the Director,

As faculty, postdocs, and students of the University of Washington (UW), we are writing to express our support for continuing the effective, integrated, and co-located structure of the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NSF NCAR). It is specifically the integration of NSF NCAR's key activities including atmospheric prediction modeling, supercomputing, observational platforms, interdisciplinary research, and training, that enables advancement beyond what individual agencies, universities, or private companies can accomplish. Preserving the core integrated research facilities and platforms and Earth system science expertise of NSF NCAR is essential for enabling atmospheric predictions that support economic resilience, public health, and public safety in the United States of America. NSF NCAR has led our community to gain the expertise, observations, and modeling tools that enable us to achieve national research priorities and provide Americans with the information needed for safety and prosperity.

It is essential that Earth system science be maintained as a focus for NSF spending. The hazards facing Americans, through wildfires, heatwaves, droughts, hurricanes, severe storms, solar storms, air quality and human health, and more, can only be understood and predicted by considering Earth as a whole system that includes the atmosphere, ocean, land, and ice. Consider heatwaves, which are often caused by land drying, and therefore cannot be accurately predicted without considering the land surface and ecosystems living there. Similarly, extreme weather and weather predictions beyond two weeks rely heavily on interactions with the land and ocean. Collaboration is a central principle of NSF NCAR that amplifies the nation's investment, particularly through the creation of openly accessible data and models and managing shared <u>observing platforms and supercomputing</u>. The capabilities of NSF NCAR are too large, complex, and long-term for individual institutions to tackle alone. Coupled to this, open community infrastructure does not emerge naturally from competitive funding and requires dedicated effort and support. Without this national center, fragmentation and duplication dominate. Long term outlook, integration of research and operations, and non-proprietary infrastructure require neutral, sustained, coordinated stewardship. The collaborative approach of NSF NCAR effectively bridges federal infrastructure with the academic research community and private industry, accelerating innovation and workforce development. The sustained effort to openly share and support our community with the resources we need is unique to NSF NCAR, and makes research, forecasting, and prediction possible across many institutions and companies.

The integration of observational infrastructure, expertise, modeling tools, and supercomputing enables NSF NCAR to provide effective and efficient training that advances our collective knowledge about the Earth system and enhances our predictive capability. Students and postdocs are given access to advanced equipment, state-of-the-art models

and data and trained in their use by experts through workshops, internships, meetings, and tutorials. The training opportunities are possible only through the resources and expertise available via the core research teams at NSF NCAR, and especially because of the center's core values of community science and dedication to sharing models, tools, research data, and expertise broadly outside the center. These shared resources level the playing field across universities, especially by providing supercomputing in a centralized facility that is tailored to the models and data used by our field. NSF NCAR enables us not only to do essential groundbreaking research, but also to start companies and non-profits, benefiting economic development, innovation, and national security. Dismantling NSF NCAR would do irreparable harm just as it is leading our country's effort to harness artificial intelligence for Earth system prediction, data analysis, and scientific discovery. Dismantling NSF NCAR would destroy the key elements which make it effective and efficient, namely the integration of the many activities and foci of NSF NCAR and the community support to use the knowledge and tools produced by the center. The process of breaking it apart would also lead to great losses of data, expertise, and institutional knowledge, not to mention incurring greater costs. This would be highly inefficient and needlessly destructive, which will set back the ability of the US to predict and plan for complex hazards that pose a risk to life and property and national security.

We strongly urge that NSF preserve the integrity and continuity of NSF NCAR and ensure that this indispensable national resource is supported for years to come.

The statements expressed herein reflect the views of the individuals signing below and do not necessarily represent the official views, policies, or positions of the University of Washington.

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