

# Weather and climate predictions are worth their weight in gold

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The economic costs of damaging weather events have an immense and increasing impact on the U.S. economy, and these costs could be anticipated and mitigated by improved weather and climate predictions, say a range of experts in the public and private sectors. These experts will convene in Washington, D.C. from April 2-4 and discuss best strategies to minimize the weather and climate's hit on people and the economy.

The year 2012 was dominated by large, weather-related losses in the United States. Hurricane Sandy and the widespread, ongoing drought in the Midwest, Great Plains, and western States caused the biggest [economic losses](#). The record storm surge from Sandy caused widespread flooding to a densely populated area and led to the worst power outage caused by a [natural catastrophe](#) in the United States. The extremely dry weather conditions and limited snowfall in much of the United States caused one of the worst droughts in recent decades, affecting more than half of the country. The insurance industry estimates that Hurricane Sandy and the drought led to total economic losses of \$140 billion in 2012. For comparison, the greatest annual loss to date was in 2005, when Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Wilma and Dennis struck Florida and the Gulf Coast states (economic losses exceeded \$187 billion, CPI-adjusted to 2012 dollars). Another high-impact weather event in June, which meteorologists called a "Derecho," with damaging thunderstorm winds affected states from the Plains to the Mid-Atlantic, an area over 1,000 miles wide, crippling [power grids](#) in nine states, leaving millions without power.

The impacts of the 2012 [severe weather](#) events are a stark reminder of how deadly and destructive weather can be and how important it is to be prepared. The National Association of Insurance Commissioners notes: "The rising likelihood of extreme and catastrophic weather events makes monitoring the frequency and impact of [natural disasters](#) a critical regulatory function." The U.S. government makes substantial investments in weather and climate information with the goal of saving lives, protecting property and promoting economic vitality. In fact, weather affects nearly every human activity— health, what you wear, construction, shopping, outdoor sports and recreation activities, planning outdoor weddings, even crime rates. Having more accurate long-range weather forecasts through continued investments in weather and climate technology, people will be able to plan their lives with greater knowledge of weather and climate.

Through NOAA's Weather-Ready Nation (WRN) initiative, the U.S. government is taking steps to lessen the impacts of extreme weather on our communities and our nation's economy. The WRN is about building community resilience in the face of increasing vulnerability to severe [weather events](#). The devastation of these events can be reduced through improved readiness. In the end, emergency managers, first responders, government officials, businesses and the public will be empowered to make fast, smart decisions to save lives and livelihoods.

The annual American Meteorological Society's Washington Forum, in Washington, D.C., April 2-4 2013, brings together members of the [weather](#), water, and climate community to meet with federal agency and administration officials and congressional staff to discuss the economic benefits of how environmental forecast, prediction and observation programs and services, strengthen the U.S. economy.

Provided by American Meteorological Society

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