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NOAA/NCEI's Challenges in Meeting New Open Data Requirements

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The U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) stewards one of the world's largest and most diverse collections of environmental data. The longevity of this organization has led to a great diversity of digital and physical data in multiple formats and media. NCEI strives to develop and implement processes, guidance, tools and services to facilitate the creation and preservation of independently understandable data that is open and FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable).

The Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act (Evidence Act) (PL 115-435), which includes the Open, Public, Electronic, and Necessary Government Data (OPEN) Act (2019), requires all U.S. Federal data to be shared openly. Meeting the requirements of the Evidence Act, FAIR and OPEN has many challenges. One challenge is the requirements are not static, they evolve over time based on the data lifecycle, changes within the designated user community (ex. user needs and skills) and transition to new technology such as cloud. Consistently measuring and documenting compliance is another challenge.

NCEI is tackling the challenges of ensuring our data holdings meet the requirements of OPEN, FAIR and the Evidence Act in multiple areas through the consistent implementation of community best practices, knowledge of current and potential user communities, and elbow grease.

This presentation will focus on NCEI's experiences with taking data beyond independently understandable to meeting the Evidence Act, FAIR, and OPEN.