

# Scientific Data and the Evidence Act

Otis B Brown

North Carolina State University

# Overview

- Introduction
- Open Data – Title II of the Evidence Act
- Presentations



# Open Data

- The “OPEN Government Data Act” became Title II of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act [PL 115-435]
  - This Act amended Section 3504(b) of title 44, United States Code to make **data open by default** which includes guidance to
    - Make each data asset of the agency available in an open format
    - Make each public data asset of the agency available as an open Government data asset under an open license
    - Ensure that any public data asset of the agency is machine-readable
    - Engage the public in using public data assets of the agency
    - Publish on the website of the agency, on a regular basis (not less than annually), information on the usage of such assets by non-Government users
    - Provide the public with the opportunity to request specific data assets to be prioritized for disclosure and to provide suggestions for the development of agency criteria with respect to prioritizing data assets for disclosure
    - Assist the public in expanding the use of public data assets by hosting challenges, competitions, events, or other initiatives

# Open Data [2]

- The Evidence Act's Title II is under implementation at an agency level for the CFO Agencies
  - This Act requires each agency to develop and maintain an Open Data Plan, which, in general, shall describe the agency's efforts to make government data open to the public
  - OMB has provided multiple guidance documents to Agencies<sup>1, 2, 3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>OMB M-19-23 “Phase 1 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Learning Agendas, Personnel, and Planning Guidance” July 10, 2019, Section III c

<sup>2</sup>OMB M-20-12 “Phase 4 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Program Evaluation Standards and Practices: March 10, 2020

<sup>3</sup>OMB M-13-13 “Managing Information as an Asset” May 9, 2013

# Open Data [3]

- Historically there have been many impediments to the sharing of scientific data from federal agencies. These have included infrastructure, access costs, as well as misunderstandings as to which data is publicly shareable and which is not.
- Just as in the statistical agencies, other agencies are finding value in combining environmental information with PII and statistical information.
- There can be challenges associated with recent Information Quality Act guidance requiring results and the process (including code) to derive published results<sup>4</sup>
- Today's presentations highlight three such efforts

<sup>4</sup>OMB M-19-15 "Improving Implementation of the Information Quality Act" April 24, 2019



# Today's presentations

- Provide two views from a federal government perspective and one from a user perspective about open scientific data and the challenges of accessing and sharing it
- Presentations
  - Dr. Heather Strosnider (Environmental Public Health Tracking Section, CDC)
    - Addressing Gaps in Evidence and Data for Environmental Public Health
  - Dr. Adam Smith (National Centers for Environmental Information, NOAA)
    - The Use of Federal Data for Costing Weather and Climate Extreme Events: Data Challenges, Needs and Opportunities
  - Dr. Ed Kearns – First Street Foundation
    - Communicating climate change risk through the use of US Government open data

