

The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

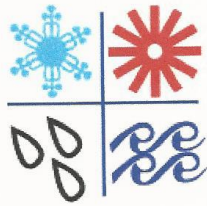
NWS FREEZES LEAD FORECASTER PROMOTIONS UNION FILES GRIEVANCE

(March 14, 2013) NWSEO has learned that in January the NWS secretly froze filling all pending lead forecaster vacancies without notice to the union or the applicants. On January 10, vacancy announcements for five lead forecaster vacancies closed, and on January 28, four other vacancies closed. Under the NOAA 80-day Hiring Model, the applications were to be reviewed and selection certificates sent to selecting officials within 11 days thereafter. However, on Wednesday, March 13, NWSEO learned that no review of the applications was ever conducted. NWSEO has also learned that there are at least an additional 12 lead forecaster vacancies across the country for which recruitment actions have not begun or were frozen at an early stage.

NWSEO has filed a grievance over this matter with the new NWS Director Louis Uccellini, demanding that these positions be filled immediately and that the selectees be given back pay. The grievance alleges that the NWS violated agreements negotiated with NWSEO in 1993 and 1997 to have five lead forecasters at each WFO.

Management's response to this grievance will be an early indication of whether the new NWS Director will seek to improve relations with NWSEO and NWS employees and honor the agency's labor commitments, or whether he will continue the trend started two years ago to dismantle the NWS by reducing its workforce. A copy of the grievance is below.

-NWSEO-



National Weather Service Employees Organization

March 13, 2013

Dr. Louis Uccellini
Assistant Administrator for Weather Services
1325 East-West Highway
Room 18130
Silver Spring, MD 20815

Dear Dr. Uccellini,

This is a union grievance filed pursuant to Article 10, section 9(b) of the parties' collective bargaining agreement concerning the agency's freeze on filling lead forecaster vacancies.

We have reviewed a RADS reported provided to us on March 12, 2013 and discovered that there are nine lead (senior) forecaster vacancies that remain vacant and which job vacancy announcements were closed in January:

Duluth	1/10
Portland	1/28
Boise	1/28
Eureka	1/28
Monterey	1/28
Sterling (2)	1/10
Raleigh	1/10
Pittsburgh	1/10

Under the published NOAA 80 day hiring model, the next step in the recruitment process - evaluation of applications - is to be completed within 10 days, and the issuance of a certification to the selecting official is to occur within 1 day thereafter. A review of the RADS report reveals that the applications received in response to the job vacancy announcements for the above positions were never evaluated and that the recruitment process was frozen in January.

In addition, a lead forecaster vacancy at WFO San Juan closed on February 14, but the applications have not been evaluated or certificate issued.

A lead forecaster vacancy at WFO Honolulu was submitted to WFMO on December 21, but no action has been taken to fill that position.

In addition, the RADS report reveals that the agency has not taken any action to fill the numerous other lead forecaster vacancies at WFOs around the country, such as the lead vacancies in Fairbanks and Juneau, (which have been vacant since last year), Minneapolis and Bismarck, (which

became vacant in January), as well as lead forecaster vacancies in Mount Holly, Pittsburgh, Nashville, Jackson, Miami and Melbourne.

The failure to recruit and/or fill these 21 (and possibly other) vacancies is a continuing violation of the agreement negotiated between the parties dated December 10, 1993 which agreed to the Human Resources and Position Management Plan as modified by that agreement, as well as the jointly agreed upon December 12, 1997 Meteorologist Placement Plan, both of which establish five lead forecaster positions at every Forecast Office.

Even if the failure to fill these positions did not violate negotiated agreements, the freeze on filling these positions constitutes a unilateral change in conditions of employment in violation of Article 8, section 3 of the parties' collective bargaining agreement. It also constitutes an unfair labor practice in violation of 5 U.S.C. section 7116(a)(1) and (5).

As relief, we demand that these positions be immediately recruited and filled, and that any promotion of unit employees into these positions be made retroactive to 80 days following the date on which the positions became vacant (which would allow for 80 days to fill the positions in accordance with the NOAA 80 day hiring plan), and that these employees be granted back pay. In addition, the union demands payment of its attorney fees in this matter.

Sincerely yours,



Daniel A. Sobien
National President