



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

Proposed Furloughs and ITO reductions – NWSEO working to keep employees at their life-saving work

(April 17, 2013) NWSEO President Dan Sobien, Executive Vice President Bill Hopkins, and Southern Region Chair John Werner are in Washington DC this week, meeting with DOC, NOAA and NWS leadership in an effort to prevent the furloughs and keep the ITO positions at 122 weather forecast offices across the country.

“NOAA’s proposal to furlough the emergency essential employees in the midst of hurricane season combined with their plan to eliminate the ITO position as AWIPS 2 is implemented is ludicrous,” said NWSEO President Dan Sobien. “We understand that sequester means tough financial decisions – but the agency is looking in the wrong place at what is clearly the wrong time. Many forecast offices are already understaffed – reports show over 200 more vacancies than in 2010. It’s a sad fact that if NOAA continues to cut the numbers our mission will be degraded.”

NOAA Acting Undersecretary Kathy Sullivan informed employees of the proposal via email April 15. The action comes despite Congress’ willingness to reprogram funds to avoid furloughs. Last month, Congress added an extra \$17 million to the NWS budget this fiscal year to mitigate sequestration impacts on personnel. An [April 12 letter from Congressman Frank Wolf](#), of the House Appropriations Committee, urges Dr. Rebecca Blank, Deputy Secretary of Commerce, to “ensure that the NWS has the funding necessary to adequately forecast the weather.”

NWSEO representatives are quoted in the following articles regarding the furlough proposal that appeared this week in [the Washington Post](#), [Government Executive](#), and [Philadelphia Inquirer](#).

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/capital-weather-gang/wp/2013/04/15/furloughs-proposed-for-national-weather-service-noaa/>

<http://www.govexec.com/pay-benefits/2013/04/four-furlough-days-noaa-lawmaker-offers-budget-help/62539/>

<http://www.philly.com/philly/blogs/weather/Storm-gathering-at-weather-service.html>

NWSEO General Council Richard Hirn met with Congressman Frank Wolf on Tuesday, April 16. He used the meeting as an opportunity to show that the impact on employees and harm to agency operations far outweighs the budget savings.

The Administration has, once again, proposed to eliminate the ITOs in the FY 14 budget. Mr. Hirn will be preparing a letter to the Appropriations Committees next week about this and the other issues in the NWS budget request. We are currently taking a survey of all NWS ITOs to update the arguments on the importance of their role at each WFO, especially in light of the AWIPS 2 installation.

“Congress knows the ITO plays a critical role to WFO operations,” said Richard Hirn. “We will work with them again this year. It is the support of our members who saved these jobs last year, we’re going to go full force and do it again.”

-NWSEO-

**No one cares more for National Weather Service employees than
National Weather Service employees.**

**No one works harder for National Weather Service employees than
National Weather Service employees.
We are NWSEO.**