



The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

Why won't they do what they promised to do?

Part 1- The Hiring Freeze

(July 30, 2013) On March 27, 2013, Acting NOAA Administrator Kathryn Sullivan implemented a hiring freeze “for all types of civilian appointments in all funding programs, except for those currently advertised.” But in order to avoid “mission failure,” she directed NOAA line offices “to determine which of these vacancies/positions are assigned to mission critical activities” and to submit “a prioritized list of all vacancies they believe necessary to fill” to a “NOAA Hiring Freeze Board” that was given authority to approve exceptions to the hiring freeze.

Dr. Sullivan’s Hiring Freeze Directive also contained two other exceptions which would permit NOAA line offices to continue to fill certain vacancies. Positions that had been advertised prior to the March 27 date would be automatically exempt from the freeze and would continue to be filled: "Job Opportunity Announcements (JOA) that have been advertised and closed by the date of this memo will continue to be processed to completion of hire."

Dr. Sullivan also wrote that NOAA was going to seek authority from DOC to advertise promotional opportunities in-house. This authority would allow NOAA line offices to promote internal candidates into vacant, higher graded positions.

Regrettably, however, National Weather Service leadership is not complying with Dr. Sullivan’s Hiring Freeze directive instructing NOAA line offices to continue to fill positions through the three exceptions contained in the March 27 directive.

On July 19, NWSEO learned the NWS has failed to proceed to fill several dozen critical operational positions at Forecast Offices across the country whose vacancy announcement closed prior to the freeze even though line offices were instructed to “process[] to the completion of hire” those positions for which job vacancy announcements closed before March 27. In many cases, certificates of eligibles

were sent to selecting officials, but no selections were ever made.

Last week, we also learned the Department of Commerce granted NOAA line offices the authority to advertise and make promotions from in-house candidates. However, the NWS still refuses to make any promotions even though this was included in Dr. Sullivan's March 27 directive. There are dozens of critical GS-13 lead forecaster and GS-12 general forecaster vacancies at forecast offices which could be filled immediately by internal candidates through internal promotion of general forecasters and GS-11 meteorological interns.

Finally, the National Weather Service failed to submit the prioritized list of vacancies to the NOAA Hiring Freeze Board, as required by Dr. Sullivan's directive. In contrast, other line offices have done so and NOAA is currently recruiting to fill scores of other positions in its other line offices as well as nearly twenty positions in NOAA program support, including several grants management specialists and *fifteen* Human Resources Specialists or Assistants. Few of these other positions appear to be those that typically would be designated as "emergency/essential" as NWS operational employees.

-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.