



# The Four Winds

National Weather Service Employees Organization

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

### Part 2- The ITO Settlement

(August 1, 2013) In the spring of 2012, NWS unilaterally froze the hiring of ITOs after the Administration proposed to eliminate these positions. NWSEO filed a grievance alleging that the agency's failure to backfill ITO vacancies violated a 2000 agreement with NWSEO to have an ITO at every WFO. The NWS denied the grievance and NWSEO scheduled the matter before a Federal Labor Arbitrator. In August 2012, just before the case was heard, the NWS settled the grievance by agreeing to resume the process of filling the ITO position "effective immediately." There were ten ITO vacancies at the time, including Key West, New York, Pittsburgh, and Flagstaff. As part of this agreement, the NWS promised to provide a monthly update on the progress of filling these positions.

The NWS never sent the monthly reports. In March 2013, NWSEO demanded the agency begin sending these reports and one report was sent. This report revealed that the agency had not filled the Key West ITO position and had placed the filling of that position on hold. NWSEO filed a grievance alleging that the NWS had violated the August 2012 settlement agreement by failing to fill the position. This grievance was denied on May 1, 2013. In the response, the NWS claimed "there were no specific deadlines identified in the agreement as to when the positions would ultimately be filled" (even though they did promise to resume filling these positions "effective immediately.") David Murray, the NWS designee for Labor Relations also wrote in this May 1 grievance response that:

*"[T]he agency filled all of the vacancies listed in the agreement with the exception of the Key West ITO position."*

On July 19, NWSEO learned that this statement by Mr. Murray *was simply not true*. In response to a follow up information request, submitted by NWSEO in preparation for an arbitration hearing over the May 1 grievance denial, the agency disclosed that in addition to Key West, it had not filled the ITO positions in New York, Pittsburgh, or Flagstaff and has suspended any actions to do so.

NWSEO has filed a new grievance over this additional failure to live up to the August 2012 settlement agreement. These two grievances will likely be heard by a Federal Labor Arbitrator this fall.

**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.**